



Distr.
LIMITED
LC/CAR/L.129(CRM.10/7)
30 July 2007
ENGLISH ONLY

Tenth session of the Regional Conference
on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Quito, Ecuador, 6-9 August 2007

**WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND
GENDER PARITY IN DECISION-MAKING AT
ALL LEVELS IN THE CARIBBEAN**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper on Women's Political Participation and Gender Parity in Decision-Making in the Caribbean has reviewed various indicators of women's participation in parliament, in government and in the public and private sectors in the English speaking islands of the Caribbean and Cuba and the Netherlands Antilles. It has found generally that there has been some improvement both in political participation and in decision making positions but that the improvement is not any where near where it is supposed to be because attainment of the 30% quota agreed upon by the Caribbean governments are still sporadic and uncertain. With regressions recorded in some areas over time.

It shows that the interventions made this far by governments, NGOs and the international community have succeeded in some measure to raise awareness of the need for gender parity but the impact of these measures must be more rigorously examined to determine the extent of their success. The study highlights that female participation in the politics of the Caribbean is about 20% overall. It also shows that participation for women is lower at the highest levels of decision making and higher at the lower echelons of management.

The study has highlighted the following features with their accompanying recommendations:

1. That the Caribbean as a whole has not yet attained the 30% quota average to which the countries have committed.
2. That there is a lag in both political will and results in the areas of: (a) selection of women to Boards of Directors; (b) programmes to increase support for female politicians in the areas of campaign financing and other kinds of support; (c) the enforcement of quota legislation; and (d) integration of accountability into national machineries
3. That there are significant gaps in the production of the results indicators which need to be enhanced especially in the areas of senior positions in the public and private sectors by type of business, the position of women in Trade Unions, Cabinet, on the Executive of Political Parties, in the Judiciary and in Ambassadorial posts.
4. That the research agenda is lagging both in output and structure. There is a need to begin to conduct a rigorous assessment of the impact of women on the politics and leadership spaces of the Caribbean to qualify and define scientifically exactly what women have been bringing and can or should bring to the political and leadership table in Parliament, Local Government, NGOs and in public and private sector organizations. The research should also examine the present impact of inequality on the political culture of countries in the Caribbean. The availability of research expertise and software in the Bureaus must also be considered and addressed.

5. That the monitoring and evaluation capacity of Women's Bureaus is weak and needs to be strengthened in order to measure the impact of policies and programmes to enhance women's political and decision making participation and other forms of gender parity.

6. That there is insufficient reference material that gives an insight into the journey of the women who have made it to the top. The case studies of women in top leadership positions ought to be documented.

7. That there is a tardiness in the conversion of international commitments into national law and also to incorporate actions to be taken into job descriptions for relevant personnel.

8. That party politics, the emergence of the concept of "male marginalization" and the shift from women and development to gender and development has weakened the women's agenda. We must find ways and means to continue to highlight the inequities and their impacts through public awareness and to have them addressed.

9. That the Caribbean countries are too dependent on political will and non-legal measures for the attainment of gender parity and ought to consider quota legislation more closely, with the proviso that the quota should be raised to 50%.

10. That the expertise to conduct a gendered assessment of policies is lacking in most women who become politically active and should be available to them as part of the training package.

A Draft Action Plan has been appended to implement the recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women and Development Unit and the Caribbean Subregional Headquarters, Port of Spain, will be hosting a preparatory meeting in St. John's, Antigua on 22-23 May 2007. The meeting is preparatory to the tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, scheduled to take place in Quito, Ecuador 6-9 August 2007.

The Caribbean preparatory meeting will focus on two main themes: the contribution of women to the economy and to social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work; and political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels.

The main objectives of the Caribbean preparatory meeting will be to review the position document prepared by the Secretariat of ECLAC on the progress that has taken place on these two issues with respect to implementation of the goals of international commitments, including the results of the Ninth Regional Conference on women (which took place in Mexico City from 10 – 12 June 2004). Background papers on each of the thematic areas are to be presented to the X Regional Conference. Within this context, a background paper entitled “Political Participation and Gender Parity in Decision-making at all Levels in the Caribbean” will be presented to the meeting.

INTRODUCTION

The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that gender equality in any society must be premised upon the ability of both men and women to participate fully and equitably in the political and decision-making processes. It reasoned that achieving balance in this area would accurately reflect the composition of society, strengthen democracy and leverage the integration of the gender dimension in government policy-making to ensure that the interests of women are well represented. Since the 1995 World Conference on Women the call has been adopted by several international agencies who have given the improvement of women's participation in politics and decision-making a place of priority on their agenda. It has been generally recognized that the improvement sought is deeper and wider than merely an increase in numbers. It is agreed that this increase must also be accompanied by three specific mandates for female politicians:

1. An increased capacity on the part of women to add value to the development process through their contribution.
2. Female politicians are also required to see beyond the traditional “women's issues” and look at **all** issues through **gendered lenses**.
3. They must be able to wield sufficient influence to censor the party when it moves contrary to the interests of women and to form networks across party lines to deal with those circumstances. This increased capacity has to be supported by careful analysis of the obstacles and challenges and a commitment to an implementable plan to overcome them at all levels.

It has been recognized that women's political participation must also include an analysis of the intensity of women's activism in civil society and the extent to which this activism results in policy decisions that are favourable to the interests of women. The presence of women in politics and senior policy making positions can have no significant effect on gender equity or equality if it is not accompanied by the following:

- A friendly ideological climate that is open to gender concerns
- Attention to the placement of women in non-traditional leadership positions after election to office.
- The assignment of female legislators to standing committees where they can influence legislative debates on a variety of issues
- Positive attitudes of political parties to gender-equity concerns
- Positive attitudes of female politicians and decision makers themselves to gender concerns
- The strength of women's movements and their influential relationship to the political directorate; and
- An effective institutional base for the promotion of gender equity that include well targeted programmes and policies.

In the context of the Caribbean, several factors impact on the participation of women in politics and decision making processes. These include:

- The policies and programmes implemented by governments as a direct attempt to advance progress and fulfill international obligations in this regard.
- The governance structures that are in place which either support or restrict gender parity in political participation and decision making.
- The constitutional, legal and other policy frameworks and the extent of their development
- The existence of a critical mass of women in politics and decision making which should enable them to exert more power and influence on the basis of their numbers

In recognition of the foregoing, this paper will seek to critically assess and review the progress made by national Women's/Gender machineries in member countries of ECLAC/CDCC in implementing international commitments and the needs of good governance and democracy regarding the political participation of women and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels in the Caribbean. The document will:

1. Review the policies and programmes implemented by the Caribbean governments to advance progress in this regard, taking into account international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women as well as the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean and the regional consensus adopted by the regional conferences on Women.
2. Identify and analyse the links between governance and gender parity in the Caribbean, particularly since 2004 and taking into account the recent general elections results and mandates in a number of Caribbean countries
3. Measure the progress of women in politics and decision-making in the Caribbean, for example in the public service, membership on Boards, participation in local government and in the private sector.
4. Assess the impact and effectiveness of the constitutional, legal and other policy frameworks in promoting the participation of women in governance at the national and sub-regional level.
5. Make recommendations and present a draft programme of action on the way forward for achieving the goal of gender parity in political participation and decision-making at all levels in the Caribbean as a strategy for achieving gender equality.

METHODOLOGY

The conclusions of this paper will be drawn from:

1. A review of the literature on the participation of women in politics and decision making in the Caribbean
2. The results of the on-line discussion (virtual forum) which took place between Ministers and Heads of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women / Gender Equality in January 2007
3. The answers received to the questionnaire on Unpaid Work and Political Participation administered by ECLAC in September 2006.
4. The responses to three questionnaires administered by the Consultant in April of 2007 to Women's Bureaux, female politicians and senior female officials.
5. Participant Observation and interviews with key personnel

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Process

The journey to increase female political participation and its ascent to decision-making positions in the Caribbean has been one, fraught with battles and challenges at individual, community, local, organizational and international levels. These battles have encompassed women's rights to citizenship, struggles to reengineer the sexist values and principles underlying social relationships, "kicking against the pricks"¹ to use education as a tool in their quest for equitable participation, revolutionizing legislative agendas, recreating governance structures and turning up the assertiveness of their voices and speed of their activities in all spaces. It has also involved expanding the territory of their research agendas and boldly intruding where no woman has gone before.

Women's Achievement of Citizenship: The Implications

Since 1944, when Jamaica followed Cuba in 1934 and became the first English speaking country in the Caribbean to achieve the right for women to vote and to be elected to Parliament, this process has taken on new dimensions at every turn bringing with it a more enlightened approach to democracy and management. "The vote opened the way to citizenship by giving women the political right to choose and be chosen in democratic elections. It was also a starting point for gender equity, and for this reason it was one of the main priorities of women's movements at the turn of the century"². It is interesting to note that for Jamaica, the uprising of women to the Parliament was instantaneous with their access to voting and to be elected. This seems indicative of two factors: the first is that the formal arrival of women in the sphere of politics was a long awaited event, and the second is that there was a critical mass of persons in Jamaica at that time who were already sensitized to the need for inclusion and gender balance in the politics of the country.

In all the countries, women achieved the right to vote at the same time that they achieved the right to stand for election, with the exception of Guyana who achieved the right to stand for election eight years before women in that country could actually vote. In the same year that women achieved the right to vote, the first woman was elected to the Parliament. This highlights the fact of women supporting each other in the electoral process. This glaring disadvantage faced by the women of Guyana over that eight-year period between the time that they could stand for election and actually cast their vote might have been one of the reasons why Guyanese women experienced the shortest gap after Jamaica between the time that they could stand for election and the time that they obtained a seat in Parliament- eight years. For all the other Caribbean countries, the women had to wait between 13 years as was the case with the Bahamas, which was the last country where women achieved the right to vote in 1961, and 33 years as was the case with St. Kitts and Nevis and Antigua and Barbuda (see Table 1 below).

¹ Biblical reference

² Valdes T. & Palacios I. (1998) Participation and Leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean: Gender Indicators

Table 1
Women's Achievement of Political Citizenship

Country	Year Women Received Right		Year First Woman Appointed or Elected to Government	Time Lapse Between Right to be Elected And Actual Election (in years)
	To Vote	To Stand for Election		
Barbados	1950	1950	1966 A	16
St. Kitts and Nevis	1951	1951	1984 E	33
Bahamas	1961,1964	1961,1964	1977 A	16,13
Trinidad and Tobago	1946	1946	1962 A&E	16
Antigua and Barbuda	1951	1951	1984 A	33
Dominica*	1951	1951	1980 E	29
St. Lucia	1951	1951	1979 A	28
Grenada	1951	1951	1976 E&A	25
St. Vincent and the Grenadines*	1951	1951	1979 E	28
Suriname	1948	1948	1963 E	15
Belize	1954	1954	1984 E&A	30
Guyana	1953	1945	1953 E	8
Jamaica	1944	1944	1944 E	0
Cuba *	1934	1934	1940 E	6

Source: Human Development Report 2006

*While there has been an indication from the Women's Bureau that this information may not be accurate for St. Vincent and The Grenadines and Dominica, no new data has been forthcoming.

*Information from the Women's Ministry indicate that the right to vote in Haiti was limited to Local Elections in 1950; full right was granted in 1957 and included in the Constitution in 1987.

Situational Analysis

Since women achieved the right to vote and to be elected between 1934 and 1961 in the Caribbean, there has been continuous progress particularly in terms of numbers. Between the period 1987-2000, the numbers of women in Parliament increased in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Grenada, and Saint Lucia. Guyana, Cuba and St. Vincent and the Grenadines showed regress. No figures were shown for Dominica and Haiti in the Human Development Report of 2000.

Between 2000 and 2006, Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Cuba, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, St. Lucia, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Guyana continued to experience an increase in Parliamentary seats held by women. while Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, Haiti and Belize experienced a regression. St. Maarten has never gotten past one woman where three seats are at stake and three women where eleven seats are at stake in their Island Council and Parliamentary Elections. Dominica however showed no increase over its 1987 figures.

The Causes and Influences

World and Regional Conferences

The chain of events that has supported this overall progress of women in Parliament in the Caribbean from 12% in 1990 to 20% in 2006 include:

1. The hosting of several World Conferences by the United Nations including:
 - the First World Conference in Mexico in 1975;
 - the Second World Conference in Copenhagen in 1980 ,
 - the Third World Conference in Nairobi in 1985,
 - the Fourth World Conference held in Beijing China in 1995;
 - the Beijing +5 conference and the Beijing + 10 conference.
 - Additionally there was the World Summit on Social Development 1995 in Copenhagen,
 - the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights ,
 - the 1994 Population and Development Conference in Cairo.

2. Several regional conferences on women in Latin America and the Caribbean hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Most notable among these being the Sixth Meeting held at Mar del Plata in 1994 as preparation for the Fourth World Conference where a Regional Programme of Action was adopted that spoke to:

“a) The promotion of different forms of affirmative action to provide and extend access for women to the exercise of power in the legislative, judicial, executive, administrative and planning spheres.

b) The promotion of initiatives aimed at bringing about conditions whereby women can achieve equitable political representation and participation in the formal and informal spheres of civil society, in all decision-making processes and in the area of development planning.”³

3. The Tenth Regional Conference that will be held in Quito (Ecuador) in August of 2007 will focus on Women’s Political Participation and Gender Parity in Decision-Making.

Establishment of Quotas

There was also the Inter-American Summits held in Miami in 1994 and in Santiago, Chile in 1998 in which governments committed themselves to the implementation of initiatives for increasing the presence of women in positions of power. “At the same time, the 1997 World Inter-Parliamentary Conference considered the question of quotas for legislative positions, and concluded that the correct level for these was around 30%. In that same year the Santiago Consensus, proposing the adoption of affirmative action measures, among other agreements, was signed at the Seventh Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, Chile.”⁴ This coincided with the target set by the Commonwealth Caribbean Ministers shortly before. It was felt that 30% would give women enough leverage to set agendas and form useful alliances. The Women’s Environment and Development Organization subsequently took the issue of quotas a step further by launching a 50/50 campaign in 2000 designed to accomplish equal representation between men and women.

³ Valdes T. & Palacios I. (1998), Participation and Leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean: Gender Indicators, ECLAC, Santiago, Chile.

⁴ Valdes T. & Palacios I. (1998), Participation and Leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean: Gender Indicators, ECLAC, Santiago, Chile.

Indicators

A significant development in the process has also been the development of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the progress of women in society both quantitatively and qualitatively. This required the collection of statistics and their publication. An important event in this regard was the Twenty Second Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean held in 1996 where the Secretariat of ECLAC was instructed to produce indicators that would be used for evaluating the process. This work began in 1997 and has incorporated information from regional governments, other international agencies and non-governmental organizations. The follow up to this was a technical meeting between producers and users of statistics that was held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2006 on the status of gender indicators.

Overall, the indicators selected were identified as indicators of political will and indicators of results. The indicators of political will are the qualitative measures that show the extent to which governments are committed to gender equity by providing information on the efforts being made to achieve it. The indicators of results on the other hand are quantitative and express numerical attainments in the form of numbers, percentages and ratios.

International Agreements

Significant instruments developed by international agencies and assemblies of international stakeholders have also contributed to the progress. These agreements serve as a roadmap for the implementation of programmes, projects and policies across transnational boundaries that are designed to achieve the objective of increased political participation and gender parity in decision making positions. These instruments include:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
2. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952).
3. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).
4. The declaration of 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women (1975).
5. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979).
6. The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985).
7. The Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).
8. The Millennium Declaration and Development Goals along with its targets and indicators (2000).
9. Quotas established by the UN Economic and Social Council, the Commonwealth Secretariat (1996) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) (2000).
10. International Development Targets of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1996).
11. The Gender Indicator Framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (1997).
12. The Commonwealth Plan of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender (2005).

13. The Inter-Parliamentary Union Action Plan (1994).
14. Gender Action Plans of International Development Banks.

Local Instruments

Instruments developed within countries have also contributed to the progress experienced in increasing women's share of parliamentary representation. Examples of these are:

- National Plans of Action which have been developed by most Caribbean countries
- National Gender Policies
- National Commissions on the Status of Women
- Inter-ministerial Committees on the Status of Women
- National legislation to remove barriers including quota laws
- Parliamentary Commissions
- Gender Focal Points

Participation in Decision-Making

Apart from legislative power, women participate in the decision making processes through their positions of leadership in public, private and non-government organizations. In this regard, the historical development indicates some improvement in numbers overall which can still be greatly enhanced to ensure gender parity in the decision making processes. Even though there has been some overall improvement in this area, available information suggests that for some countries there is a fluctuation of levels over time.

It is interesting to note that the disparity in figures between men and women at the highest levels are not consistent with the disparity in the figures between male and female university graduates where the women surpass the men. The observation that there is a dearth of information on women in decision making positions especially at the lower levels still exists. Many countries of the Caribbean have now surpassed the 30% quota of female Permanent Secretaries. Table 9 gives more details.

New Challenges: Male Marginalization

As is the case with women in political decision-making processes, the debate here does not concentrate on figures but on what contribution female leaders can make to the organizations that they serve, what are the skills that they need to bring and how they can match the "boys network" to effectively bring about gender parity. Two new challenges have been added to the traditional ones of attitudes to female leadership, stereotyping, balancing family responsibilities, the boys' network and sexual harassment in the workplace. These are the concepts of "male marginalization" and the paradigm shift from women and development to gender and development.

The introduction of the concept of "male marginalization" in the 1990s has in some ways obscured the real situation of women in terms of equality in decision making processes at the highest levels. Indeed it has made the journey to equality much more difficult by derailing the

agenda for promoting women's progress beyond the glass ceiling. The idea that men in the Caribbean were being "marginalized" arose from the growing evidence that many boys were underperforming in the education system and men were experiencing economic and social crisis which some persons were attributing to the feminist activities of individual women and the women's movement, as well as to the actions of institutions and states. This economic and social dislocation was, however, a fallout from globalization. This concept was a backlash to the momentum of the decade for women and post Beijing eras because it was now being suggested that there was no longer a need to focus on addressing issues affecting women. Eudine Barriteau has described it very succinctly when she remarked that "fundamental fault lines are apparent which suggest that commitment to women's political and economic well-being has shifted and is in a state of flux."⁵

Shift in Paradigm

This new obstacle is ably assisted by the shift that has been made from women and development to gender and development. The requirements of this adaptation have brought new dimensions to the struggle and taken the focus, at least temporarily, from implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the follow-up of Goal 3 on Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women of the Millennium Development Goals and other agreements. The readjustment has placed an additional strain on the limited human resource, research, financial and expert capacities of the women's machineries. The necessary pause that women have had to make for the cause of gender may be quite detrimental to the achievement of equality, at least in the short and medium terms. This pause is explained by the fact that the Bureaus now had to acquaint themselves with the theoretical framework on Gender and Development and review their programme of activities to accommodate the expanded mandate. This new engagement with the concept of gender and development was necessary since many of the Women's Bureaus changed their names to Gender Affairs Divisions. Previous programming within the Women and Development paradigm did not include any serious analysis of the impacts of development on men, neither did it make it mandatory for the Women's Bureaus to implement programmes to address the needs of men as is now the case.

All is not lost however, because since the Beijing Conference, more resources have been allocated for meeting gender equality targets. Additionally, important institutions, such as the multilateral development banks have joined the struggle by introducing systems to ensure outcomes in the area of gender equality.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Engagement of National Machineries with International Community

Overall, National Machineries have utilized several approaches to obtain the required results in improving the political participation of women and gender parity in decision making processes in

⁵ Barriteau V. E.- Beyond A Backlash: The Frontal Assault on Containing Caribbean Women in the Decade of the 1990s- Chapter 7 of Gender Equality in the Caribbean- Reality or Illusion- Edited by Gemma Tang Nain and Barbara Bailey for Caricom Secretariat.

the Caribbean. These include a range of programmes and policies which include participation in the world and regional conferences and making commitments to the international agreements that emanate from them. A major challenge for many countries however remains the acquisition of a genuine commitment across the Board of all stakeholders to upholding the commitments. Another setback is the slow pace of conversion of these agreements into national law.

In this regard, this pathway has been weakened by inter-ministerial committees and gender focal points that do not function. The recently published Handbook on Gender Focal Points prepared by the Women's Department of the Ministry of Human Development of Belize should provide a useful guide for strengthening the focal points where these exist.

Accountability: The Link between Planning and Implementation

Improvements in the participation of women in politics and gender parity in decision-making processes are partly related to the ability of national machineries to convert the commitments into action plans and ensure that these action plans find their way into the job descriptions and employment contracts of specific personnel. While this is one sure means of bridging the gap between planning and implementation it is by no means the only mechanism for achieving the goals. It gives rise to the question of accountability. As long as no one is held directly accountable for the achievement of results in fulfilling these commitments, the achievement of set goals would remain sporadic, ad hoc and uncertain. National machineries may therefore wish to review and strengthen the situation of accountability within their procedures as a means of propelling the process forward.

The Role of Non-Government Organizations

The work of non-governmental organizations in supporting governments to achieve gender parity must be strongly underlined. What is required is a strengthening of the commitment on the part of governments to form solid partnerships and facilitate the work of these organizations. Some notable interventions on the part of non-government organizations include the hosting of conferences on Engendering Local Government, roundtable discussions on Women in Politics, the formulation of women's election manifestos, the establishment of women's political platforms, the formation of networks and caucuses of female executives and of politicians. This is in addition to the hosting of training interventions to prepare women for the responsibilities of higher office in the political realm and also in the public and private sectors. In this regard, there is the work of the Women's Leadership Institute and the National Resource and Documentation Centre of Guyana, the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus and the Network of Non-Government Organizations for the Advancement of Women in Trinidad and Tobago who provide training, preparation, and in the case of Jamaica, financial aid to female political aspirants on a non partisan basis.

A Women's Political Caucus has been in existence in Jamaica, Belize and Suriname, for several years now. One was also attempted in Guyana. These caucuses include women already in Parliament and bring women together across the political divide. They are important spaces for women to define an agenda of leadership in policy making, however they have not yet adopted a role of impressing the Women's Arms of political parties across the region to take on board an

agenda of empowering women for leadership at central government level. A Women's Political Forum was inaugurated in Grenada July 2002 with support from CPDC and the Trinidad and Tobago Network for the Advancement of Women.

Several efforts on the part of NGOs were highlighted by Hazel Brown who shared that "the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) has started to provide training in building core competence in political campaigning to women who aspire to serve in political office at central government level. As part of this programme a manual on gender sensitive policy making has been developed by the Centre for Gender Studies UWI St. Augustine, with the financial support of FES. The manual aims to assist women in becoming knowledgeable, skilled and effective policy makers; especially those who succeed in their quest to enter Parliament. Another area of activity is the recording and showcasing of women's participation in Parliaments throughout the region. The Trinidad and Tobago Network for the Advancement of Women has produced a book on women's political participation in that country. CAFRA is working on a similar regional publication. The series "Caribbean Women Catalysts for Change" by the Centre for Gender Studies, Cave Hill which tries to distill lessons from the political leadership of women such as Dame Nita Barrow, Dame Mary Eugenia Charles and others, is yet another project in documenting the participation and contribution of women. The UNIFEM Caribbean Office implemented a project entitled "Transformational Leadership" in which women who have made impact on their communities out of their own initiative and vision are being identified and their strategies for effecting positive change studied."⁶

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the St. Augustine Campus of the university of the West Indies held a useful intervention to increase the technical capacity of Heads of Women's' Bureaus/ Gender Affairs Divisions. The newly established Caribbean Institute for Women in Politics organized by Caribbean activists and politicians should prove to be a significant development if their objectives of providing training and education, advocacy, gender-sensitive training for men and women and support to female parliamentarians are fulfilled. CAFRA is collaborating with CPDC for a media campaign on Women's Political Leadership with a cartoon series being conducted in one Caribbean country promoting women in politics. Adequate funding remains a major challenge for all the NGOs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Insufficient work has been undertaken, however, on assessing the impact of the various interventions to determine which carry the most weight in achieving the results. There is a need for building capacity for monitoring and evaluation at all levels of the national machineries. What is certain is that the role that non-government organizations have played in lobbying and advocating for an increased share of the political pie and decision making positions has succeeded in acquiring a positive although slow response from most governments.

⁶ Brown H- Paper on "Put a Woman" presented at the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan.2007.

Women's Bureaux

Women's Bureaux have stepped up their programming to prepare women to play a greater part in politics and decision making at the highest levels. St. Kitts and Nevis has hosted an intervention in Democracy and Governance and is planning a Youth Parliamentary Sitting on the issue. A support group has been created on both islands to raise awareness and also to support women candidates and the Women's Issues 2004 periodical has highlighted women's entitlement to equality in public life. In some instances, International Women's Day celebrations have focused on this theme, for example, in Belize at the Women's Summit in 2006. Belize has subscribed to achieving the 30% quota through its Women's Agenda 2003-2008. It has also established a gender Integration Committee who is working on a Gender Integration Plan 2007-2009.

The Bureaux have been making use of the electronic media to get the message across as in Trinidad and Tobago where there was a six part television series entitled Putting Gender on The Agenda. One segment dealt with Leadership and Decision-Making. Such attempts at raising public awareness serve to keep the issue at the forefront and to remind administrators in the public and private sector that there should be gender equality in recruitment at every level and particularly at the highest levels where the inequalities exist at the present time. The Jamaica Women's Bureau has stepped up its activism in the area of Legislative Reform by facilitating the enactment of key reforms related to gender equality. Antigua, St. Kitts and Guyana participated in an OAS funded programme on Women's Political Participation – Governance and Democracy.

The Guyana National Plan of Action 2000-2004 provided a comprehensive approach for addressing such issues as health, education, agriculture, unemployment, violence, against women and leadership issues. The Guyana Women's Leadership Institute was established in 1997 to empower women for personal and public leadership

Research

A solid programme of research that is valid, reliable and relevant is a sine qua non of development in all sectors. It is no less so in the area of gender and development. An ongoing programme of research will enable the Women's Bureaus in the Caribbean to make more accurate, well targeted decisions and to respond quicker and more readily to the demands for reporting and publishing results both regionally and internationally. In reviewing suggestions emanating from research in the Caribbean over the past two years on the question of women's participation in politics and decision making in the Caribbean, the results showed that of nine countries who responded to the questionnaire on Unpaid Work and Women's Political Participation sent by ECLAC in preparation of the Tenth Regional Conference, only Dominica and Suriname reported studies in this area within the past two years.

A significant contributor to the paucity of research in this and other gender related areas is the absence of research personnel and statisticians in the women's bureaus. It is absolutely necessary that all the statistical indicators for women's participation in politics and decision-making be rigorously maintained for the purpose of monitoring progress. It is heartening to note however

that the question of data collection is occupying the attention of the women's bureaus since an ECLAC meeting on the status of gender indicators held in Trinidad and Tobago last November recommended that each bureau recruit a statistician and that the National Statistical Offices each set up a gender unit.

Dominica highlighted the "Paper on Women, Power and Decision Making in CARICOM countries: Moving Forward from a Post Beijing Assessment".⁷ There were a number of consultations held to inform a cumulative report on Dominica's compliance with CEDAW, a Situational Analysis of Women and Men in Dominica in Education, Tourism, Finance and Politics and also a report on the Academic Achievement of Dominican Women and Access to Power and Decision Making: Exploring the Underlying Factors for Women's Under Representation.

In the case of Suriname, four reports were highlighted:

1. Equal Access; Participation of Women in Politics and Management by J.K. Joemmanbaks, Jan 2005
2. Analysis of political party programmes which participated in the elections conducted by Rehanna Hasnoe for the Women's Parliament Forum August 2005.
3. Process about the nomination of women in the cabinet 2005-2010 conducted by the Women's Parliament Forum
4. Analysis of the results of the general, free and confidential elections conducted by Henna Guicherit for the Women's Parliament Forum September 2005.

Recommendations from these reports are attached at Appendix 1.

CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND OTHER POLICY FRAMEWORKS

National Law

While constitutional provisions that remove barriers and support women's political participation must assist in setting the stage for increasing this participation, it is worthwhile to observe that most Caribbean countries have no provisions that specifically deal with the political participation of women. Of the nine countries responding to the ECLAC survey, only three reported related provisions in their constitutions and even these were not quite specific to women. These were Cayman Islands, Belize and Suriname. The Cayman Islands Constitution Order Section 18 outlines the qualifications for elected members of the Legislative Assembly and Section 27 outlines the right to vote in elections. Through these sections of the Constitution, women of the Cayman Islands are eligible to run for office and vote in elections.

⁷ Vassal L.- Paper on Women, Power and Decision Making in CARICOM Countries: Moving Forward from a Post Beijing Assessment in "Gender Equity in the Caribbean- Reality or Illusion" edited by Gemma Tang Nain and Barbara Bailey for the CARICOM Secretariat.

In Suriname, Articles 61, 162 and 163 of the Constitution indicate how the composition of the representative bodies takes place. They also indicate explicitly that the composition of the representative bodies takes place after general, free and confidential elections. All the articles indicate how the state is organized, what the basic principles are for democratic functioning of the political bodies, who can choose, who stands as a candidate, the electoral system and how the participation of the citizens is arranged in politics and management.

Art. 6.b indicates the social purpose of the state to guarantee the participation of the community in political life by national, regional and sectoral participation.

Art 8.2 states that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of birth, sex, race, language, religion, origin, education, political conviction, economic position, social circumstances and any other status.

There is no specific rule to give any group a preferential treatment.

The constitution of St Vincent and the Grenadines provides freedom of association to all regardless of sex, age, color. This therefore gives Vincentians the right to stand for and hold office, hence once women decide to participate in politics, there is no policy or legislation that prevents them. As a matter of fact, since the institutionalization of the Women's bureau in 1984, there has been an increase of the number of women participating in the political process.

National Gender Policies

National gender policies are being given an increasingly important role in the quest for gender parity in politics and decision making processes in the Caribbean as they seek to establish national positions that arise from international agreements. They serve as a guide for the development of policies across sectors and projects and programmes based on gender equity. The Gender Policies identify critical areas for attention and assign responsibilities for implementation. They are being developed through a process of consultation with the national community. Governments however, as in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, are exercising discretionary vetoes over the policies. This is a situation that can cause some gender issues to find themselves as the subject of a referendum if participatory democracy is to be maintained.

Jamaica has been actively pursuing an increase in women's participation in political and public life through its national machinery which includes the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus and other agencies. They have utilized legislation supporting non-discrimination and have ensured that women are both allowed to vote in all elections and eligible to participate as candidates as well as to hold public office and be advocates in NGOs concerned with the public and political life of the country. "The Jamaica Women's Political Caucus, an NGO, continues to provide leadership/assistance in the form of training, preparation and financial aid to female political aspirants on a non-partisan basis. In fact, for the recent national elections the Caucus, from its Candidates Fund, was able to grant funds to each of the twenty-eight female candidates to assist them with their campaign efforts. The Caucus also supports and facilitates the growth of women aspiring to leadership in other spheres of community or public

life.”⁸ The appointment of a female Prime Minister in Jamaica can be a further catalyst for improving the overall status of women.

The foregoing paragraph captures the essence of the non-legal approach to this issue in the Caribbean where an improvement in the status of women in politics and decision making – as it is the case in most countries of the world - is more dependent on political will and the efforts of the women than legally enforceable mandates.

Constitutional Reform

The neutrality of Caribbean Constitutions on the issue of women’s participation in political life and decision making processes serves more to remove the barriers to female participation than to assure it. Some of the islands however, are engaged in a process of constitutional reform and it is useful for all stakeholders in the national machineries to be vigilant regarding the inclusion of clauses that will specifically require gender parity in politics and other decision making processes. According to Hazel Brown, “the constitutional review processes have been key spaces for women to influence the inclusion, in national constitutions, of quotas and international commitments to advance women’s participation in political decision making. Overall this has been a difficult juncture of engagement and the intervention experiences of women in Antigua/Barbuda, Jamaica, and Guyana, have had varied results. Along the way expertise has been gained which should be shared with women in the other countries where review is in progress, or in those countries where reviews have been completed but actions recommended are still pending.”⁹ In the case of Antigua, many women were mobilized to participate in the process of constitutional reform but up to May 2007 , the process remained incomplete and on the back burner. In reporting to CEDAW, the representative for Guyana in 2001 explained that the Constitutional Reform Commission had made a recommendation for a mandatory representation of 33.3% women in the list of candidates representing all political parties participating in general and regional elections. This assisted in the attainment of the quota of women in Parliament even though there was no mandate for selecting the quota for the Parliament.

Quota Laws

In any attempt to shift the emphasis from political will to legally enforceable mechanisms, quota laws are commendable because they cannot fail to ensure the right balance in numbers. What they cannot determine however, is that the right type of women will be selected to promote and support gendered politics. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Network of Non-Government Organizations for the Advancement of Women has begun to prepare the ground by introducing the programme “Why Women? What Politics?”. The purpose of this programme is to institute widespread dialogue and consensus on the type of politics that women should introduce.

There is reason to agree with the analysis of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) that quota laws ought to be supported by a range of other measures and should really be an initial temporary

⁸ Jamaica Women’s Bureau-Excerpt from response to question on constitutional provisions in Survey on Unpaid Work and Political Participation.

¹⁰ Brown H- Paper on “Put a Woman” presented at the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan.2007

catalyst for broader social change. In keeping with the non-legal approach to this issue, none of the Caribbean islands have introduced quota laws but they have subscribed in principle to the 30% quota established by the Santiago Consensus and the Commonwealth Ministers. CARICOM Ministers in 2004 reaffirmed their commitment to the thirty (30%) target of women in decision making in the political, public and private sectors by the year 2015. Guyana has come closest to institutionalizing quota laws through the recommendation of the Constitutional Reform Commission for mandatory representation of 33.3% women on the lists of all political parties contesting general and regional elections. Some NGOs have joined the WEDO Campaign and are pushing for 50%. The attainment of 30% quotas may seem like a significant milestone to begin with, but it may be time to move beyond this paltry figure to reflect a true representation of the gender balance in each society and give women an equally significant say in the management of their affairs both in terms of mass and contribution.

It has been noted that quota laws must be linked to electoral systems and not all the systems may be conducive to this method for attaining parity.

International Conventions

The Caribbean countries have a fair track record for acceding to international instruments that are supportive to gender parity in politics and decision making. Some of these include the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women; the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which all have acceded to besides Cuba, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and the Bahamas; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights where the picture is the same except for Haiti who acceded to the former but not the latter and Belize who has signed but not yet acceded to the latter. Then there is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) which has been ratified by all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This landmark Convention designed to guarantee the rights of women “obliges the countries that have ratified it to draw up national agendas for the advancement of women and gender equity. Every four years or so the Governments are required to submit a national report to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is responsible for following up the Convention and setting out the measures that have been implemented during the preceding period to put the principles of the Convention into effect”.¹⁰ The strong point of this Convention is that women can enforce compliance in those countries that have ratified it.

Special focus on the international human rights instruments and conventions promoting gender justice is being undertaken as a joint project by the Directorate of Gender Affairs in Antigua/Barbuda, and the Bureaux of St. Kitts/Nevis, and Guyana. This is an important aspect of constructing a knowledge base, and building awareness of the international gender equality guarantees that should be among indicators of our level of development.¹¹

¹⁰ Valdes T. & Palacios I. (1998) Participation and Leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean: Gender Indicators, ECLAC, Santiago, Chile

¹¹ Brown H- Paper on “Put a Woman” presented at the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan.2007

GOVERNANCE AND GENDER PARITY

Governmental structures such as Ministries and National Commissions of Gender Affairs, Women's Bureaus, Inter-ministerial Committees and Gender Focal Points remain positive mechanisms for the advancement of women. Their effectiveness, however, hinge upon the strength, commitment and political savvy of their heads, the capacity of their human and intellectual capital, the extent of their funding, and the ability of these units to turn commitment into outcome via implementation. In addition to the physical infrastructure for governance, we must also examine how various policies, procedures and interventions affect gender parity.

Interministerial Committees and Gender Focal Points

Interministerial Committees have been weakened by changes in personnel and political administrations. They have also waned in enthusiasm as a result of the shift from women to gender as these institutions have had to refocus their programmes to come to terms with the features of the new concept. These Committees received their initial impetus from the Decade for Women and its culmination in the Fourth World Conference on Women and although the challenges for women's equality have remained, the conceptual framework has shifted, and with it, the enthusiasm.

The Gender Focal Points have suffered from insufficient training, weak supporting structures such as the absence of guidelines, lack of inclusion of duties and responsibilities in performance management systems as an expected outcome of performance, and lack of relevant information with which to function. It is not uncommon to meet with persons who have been vested with the responsibility of being a Gender Focal Point in a sector, who is ignorant of the gender commitments made by their government with regard to that sector. Belize's publication of a handbook for the Gender Focal Points is a step in the right direction that should be emulated throughout the Caribbean.

The Case of Belize

Information coming out of Belize is a good example of how governance structures are operationalized to bring about gender parity. In 2006 the Gender Integration Committee began working on the development of a Gender Integration Action Plan for 2007-2009. A consultant was hired to carry out this process and the plan was completed in late 2006. The Women's Department, Chairs this Committee and has the following responsibilities: to assist in identifying, recruiting and training persons from government, non-government, and community-based organizations, schools and businesses; to implement the 2007 – 2009 Plan of Action; to organize quarterly meetings of the Gender Focal Points Committee; and to report on all activities implemented by the Committee. Four priority areas were identified and then expanded into specific goals, objectives and activities. The sensitization of policy and decision-makers aims to increase support and participation of Chief Executive Officers, Heads of Departments, Administrative Officers, Supervisors, Principals and Directors of NGO's, CBO's and businesses in the Gender Integration Program. One of the objectives is that by December 2009, 75% of all senior officials will be aware of and sensitized to the Gender Integration Program. This objective

includes activities such as gender training for senior officials within ministries as well as directors of community-based organizations.

On 5-6 September 2006, the Women's Department held its second in a series of workshops on Gender Integration aimed at identifying the inequities experienced by both men and women and suggesting actions for the correction of gender disparities as well as giving guidance on the coordination and implementation of the National Gender Policy. The two-day workshop, funded through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) focused specifically on participants, referred to as Gender Focal Points, identifying gender needs within their ministry or organization and developing a strategic plan of action to integrate gender into their programs, policies and plans.

The role and responsibilities of GFP's was addressed as well as support mechanisms to enable active collaboration between Women's Department and ministries and organizations. Priority areas of the National Gender Policy were also discussed and integrated into the one year strategic plan of action that was initiated at this workshop. Participants of the workshop included representatives from the Ministry of Education, National Development, Human Development, Police, Social Investment Fund, Jesuit Volunteers, Community Baboon Sanctuary Women's Group, Edward P. Yorke High School and District Association of Village Councils.

In 2005, a Gender Integration Training Manual was developed based on three Training Modules: A Gender Focal Point Handbook was developed in 2007 to enhance the work of Gender Focal Points. This Handbook was developed to guide Gender Focal Points working in partnership with the Women's Department of Belize, Gender Integration Program. It provides advice, inspiration and guidance as well as ideas and suggestions that can help enhance the impact of Gender Focal Points work within their different ministries, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, schools and businesses. Each section of the Handbook is self-contained. Section 1 provides basic information on the Women's Department Gender Integration Program and the National Gender Policy. Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 are more practical and action-oriented. They include lists of initiatives and actions that can be taken; they offer arguments on challenging aspects of gender work. They provide checklists as to how it is to best mainstream gender into projects and their expected results. Section 6 recommends key policy documents that may be of use to GFPs.

It is anticipated that with these new structures in place there will be a greater sensitivity in relation to attitudes that have contributed to gender disparities and low political participation on the part of women."¹²

Continuous review, restructuring and capacity building are required to maintain these institutions.

Parliamentary Procedures

It is worthwhile to note here that Parliamentary procedures are not "women friendly". In fact they are not gender sensitive at all, but given the role of women in the family, especially the

¹² Belize Women's Department of the Ministry of Human Development-Excerpt from response to questionnaire

single parent family, and the inequitable distribution of unpaid work between men and women, the impact is expected to be heavier on women. Reference is being made here to the long hours of parliamentary sittings. In this regard, the women of Antigua must be congratulated for the stance they took to have the length of Parliamentary sittings reviewed to become more “human friendly”. The Inter-Parliamentary Union summarized the requirements for Parliament as follows:

‘Gender-sensitive parliaments’ are those which institute family-friendly hours; institute specific measures to familiarise women with parliamentary procedures and the political process in general, including mentoring systems; ensure that all policies and legislation, including the national budget, was analysed from a gender perspective; include a special parliamentary committee in charge of monitoring obligations under national, international and regional human rights instruments, and are also entrusted with task of proposing amendments to existing legislation, or introducing additional legislation, so as to protect women's rights. These parliamentary committees enjoy a strong relationship to a number of non-governmental women's organisations.¹³

Also, the legislative process can serve as a hindrance to the passage of legislation that can contribute to the cause of gender equality. In the words of the Jamaica Women's Bureau “The legislative process itself is another factor which contributes to the delay in the passage of important legislation. It is the established practice for Bills introducing significant changes to be referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for examination and debate and recommendations. This procedure serves to bring to public attention proposed changes to the law and to provide an opportunity for the participation of special interest groups and members of the public in the formulation of such legislation. Unfortunately, this procedure can result in a protracted delay in settling the provisions of proposed legislation, especially if the subject matter is controversial. The proposed Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Constitutional Amendment Bill) has suffered this fate. This amendment of the Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex is part of the package of provisions contained in this Bill. The Charter has been subjected to intense and prolonged debate at the Joint Select Committee stage. The examination of this Bill has spanned several parliamentary sessions and changes in the composition of Parliament, resulting in changes in the membership of Committee upon its reconstitution and the reopening of many issues that had been considered settled.”¹⁴

It is clear then that a high priority for female politicians must be, not only reform of the legislation, but of the governance structures that bring the legislation into being.

Political Systems

The Westminster system of adversarial party politics is a structure that poses serious challenges for the advancement of gender parity and the functioning of female politicians in the region. These patriarchal organizations, that have honed to a fine art the subordination of women

¹³ Inter-Parliamentary Union- Women in Politics 1945-2005 Data Sheet #6 Ten Years in Review- Women in Parliaments Worldwide

¹⁴ Jamaica Women's Bureau-Excerpt from response to question on constitutional provisions in Survey on Unpaid Work and Political Participation.

through relegation to positions of servitude to the men who make the decisions in the parties, are now beginning to get the message. An example of this is the selection of three female Deputy Political Leaders to head the relatively new party in Trinidad and Tobago called the Congress of the People. This party has one third of its Executive comprised of female members. The women of the region were recently heartened by the ascension of the Honourable Portia Simpson- Miller to the post of Prime Minister of Jamaica and Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party. However, this attainment cannot bring complacency if it is not accompanied by a proper proportional representation of women in cabinet, parliament and in the party's executive. Women are now enjoying the position of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Political leaders and Chairpersons of political parties. A woman has recently been elected as the Deputy Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Governance Interventions

Governance structures themselves must be strengthened by continuance review and dialogue and the will to mainstream gender into these structures in order to enhance parity. In this regard some commendable interventions have occurred. The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the OAS, in collaboration with the UNDP Barbados office, has convened two governance conferences that have bearing on women's political participation; "Constitutional Reform in the Caribbean" Barbados, January 20 – 22, 2002; "Local Governance in Small States" St. Vincent and the Grenadines, April 14 – 15, 2003. Other actions include OAS/UPD research on Political Party and Campaign Financing in the region, 2003; and support to the awareness raising work initiated by the Directorate of Gender Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda. The UNDP Barbados office is also engaged in defining a programme of work on governance that seeks to promote women's participation in decision making. The Washington based National Democratic Institute has been training women to participate in the Local Government System in Guyana, and sponsored the "Fifty/Fifty Increasing Women's Political Participation in the Caribbean Conference" Guyana, May 27 – 30, 2003.

UNDEF was established in July 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund. Its primary purpose is to support democratization throughout the world. UNDEF will finance projects that build and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The Fund will provide assistance to governmental, non-governmental, national, regional, and international organizations, including relevant United Nations departments, offices, funds, programmes and agencies. The Fund will complement current UN efforts to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. The Network's Put a Woman project was the only Caribbean project approved in the first round of funding in 2006."¹⁵

The University of the West Indies held its First Annual Parliamentary Workshop on Electoral Systems, Socio-economic Conditions and Gender Performance in the Commonwealth Caribbean at the St. Augustine Campus in January 2007. This timely conference examined Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, Gender and Parliamentary Representation, Parliament in the Age of Information and Communication Technology, Parliament and the Scrutiny of the Executive and a general discussion on Parliamentary Affairs in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

¹⁵ Brown H- Paper on "Put a Woman" presented at the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan.2007

PROGRESS IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women in Government at Ministerial Level 1998-2005

There has been a marked progress in the participation of women at ministerial level in almost all Caribbean countries between 1998 and 2005. The improvements vary between no change as in St. Kitts and Nevis and a 27% advancement as is the case with Grenada. Grenada is the only country that has surpassed the 30% quota with 40% of women in government at ministerial level. They are followed closely by Barbados with 29.4% Bahamas at 26.7% and Guyana at 22.2%. Other countries showing marked improvements were Antigua and Barbuda with a 15% increase, Cuba with 11% and the Bahamas and St. Vincent and the Grenadines with 10% each. While Barbados had almost attained the quota, their progress between 1998 and 2005 was very minimal and amounted to only 2.1%. St. Lucia was the only country that suffered a regression with -2%.

Given Jamaica's headstart in attaining citizenship for women and their instantaneous election to political office in 1944, their progress towards attaining the 30% quota is remarkably slow. It is early days yet, since the Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller has ascended to the position of Prime Minister but it is expected that this development should bring with it a marked improvement in this position at least in the medium to long term. For the time-being, the ministerial positions are still dominated by the men (see Table 3 below).

Disparities between Lower and Upper Houses 2006

There is a noticeable difference between women's participation in Parliament in the Lower House and in the Upper House in 2006. In every instance where the data appeared, it showed a much higher presence of women in the Upper House or Senate where they are nominated than in the Lower House where they are elected. The greatest differences showed up in St. Lucia, Bahamas and Guyana with 31%, 23% and 19% disparities respectively. The lowest disparities showed up in Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada with 8%, 7% and 4% respectively.

The disparity is a positive development because it indicates a willingness on the part of governments to improve on the status of gender equality in the Parliament. Through this process of selection some countries such as the Bahamas (43.8%), Trinidad and Tobago (32.3%), St. Lucia (36.4%) and Grenada (30.8%) have attained and surpassed the goal of 30% participation in their Upper Houses.

In the Lower House on the other hand only Guyana and Cuba have attained the 30% quota with 36% and 30.8% respectively. Grenada is following closely with 26.7%, Suriname with 25.5% and Bahamas with 20%. Those who are lagging behind include St. Lucia with 5.6%, Belize with 6.7% and Antigua and Barbuda with 10.5%. Special attention needs to be paid to St. Kitts and Nevis who have no women in the Parliament apart from the Speaker of the House. Table 3 refers.

Seats in Parliament Held by Women, 1999-2006 (Lower House)

The available evidence indicates that there is definitely an improvement in the participation of women in the Parliaments of the Caribbean both in the Senate and in the Lower House in some countries. The improvements are largely incremental and are by no means sufficient. In some instances there have been regressions. A point of celebration is that while in 1999 no island had obtained the 30% quota in the Lower House and only Cuba was near enough, in 2006 Cuba and Guyana attained and surpassed the quota with Grenada, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago almost there. The largest margins of progress were obtained by Guyana who had a 15.2% increase, St. Vincent and the Grenadines with a 13.4% increase, Suriname with a 10% increase followed by Cuba with 9%. Trinidad and Tobago experienced no change in the period and St. Kitts and Nevis dropped from 13.3% to nil. Apart from St. Kitts, the countries that regressed were St. Lucia who fell by 8.7%, Belize by 7% and Jamaica by 5%. The Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Dominica experienced small incremental improvement ranging from 0.4 to 5.7 %. See. Table 2 below:

Table 2
Women's Political Participation
(In percentage)

Country	Women in Government at Ministerial Level		Seats in Parliament Held by Women		
	1998	2005	1999	2006	2006
				Lower House	Upper House/Senate
Barbados	27.3	29.4	--	13.3	23.8
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0
Bahamas	16.7	26.7	19.6	20	43.8
Trinidad and Tobago	13.6	18.2	19.4	19.4	32.3
Antigua and Barbuda	0.0	15.4	11.1	10.5	17.6
Dominica	20.0	a/ 0.0	9.4	12.9	-
St. Lucia	10.0	8.3	14.3	5.6	36.4
Grenada	13.3	40.0	--	26.7	30.8
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	10.0	20.0	4.8	18.2	-
Suriname	5.3	11.8	15.7	25.5	-
Belize	0.0	6.3	13.5	6.7	25.0
Guyana	15.0	22.2	15.6	30.8	-
Jamaica	11.1	17.6	16.3	11.75	19.0
Cuba	5.7	16.2	27.6	36.0	Nil
Turks and Caicos	b/ 15.8	21.1	-	-	-

Source: UNDP Human Development Reports 1999, 2000 & 2006

a/ Information from the Women's Bureau shows one woman in a ministerial position in Dominica in 2005.

-- No available data.

b/ Figure for TCI is from 2000 and not 1998

Progress and Setbacks in National Parliaments (Lower House) 1995-2005

It is significant that while regressions were recorded in three countries for the years 1999-2006 for female participation in the Lower House, there were no regressions recorded for 1995 to 2005. It can therefore be concluded that the change occurred in elections held in 2005 and it would be useful to examine the reasons for the regressions. The highest percentage increase was recorded in 1999- 2006 (15%) while increases between 1995-2005 did not surpass 13.2%. No movements were recorded for three countries between 1995 and 2005, Trinidad and Tobago,

Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis but between 1999 and 2006, while Trinidad and Tobago remained the same, there was regression for Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis. In reviewing this information, there is reason for concern that up to 2006, the result indicators are still failing to show a progressively upward trend (see Table 3 below).

Table 3
Progress and Setbacks of Women in National Parliaments

Country	Lower Chamber of Parliament						
	1/7/1995					1/1/2005	
	Women	Total Seats	%	Women	Total Seats	% of Women	Evolution in percentage points
Cuba	134	589	22.8	219	609	36	13.2
St Vincent and the Grenadines	2	21	9.5	5	22	22.7	13.2
Bahamas	4	49	8.2	8	40	20.0	11.8
Saint Lucia	0	17	0.00	2	18	11.1	11.1
Guyana	13	65	20.0	20	65	30.8	10.8
Dominica	3	32	9.4	6	31	19.4	10.0
Belize	1	29	3.5	2	30	6.7	3.2
Barbados	3	28	10.7	4	30	13.3	2.6
Trinidad and Tobago	7	36	19.4	7	36	19.4	0.0
Jamaica	7	60	11.7	7	60	11.7	0.0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	16	0.0	0	15	0.0	0.0

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union Women in Politics 1945-2005 Information Kit Data Sheet #2 – www.guide2womenleaders.com.

While it is not represented in the table, information on women's political participation in the Netherlands Antilles suggests the same pattern. "For the island council elections for Curacao from 1995 up to 2000, only six of the 21 members of the island council were women. On the other hand the Chair of the Executive Council is the Lt. Governor of the island who happens to be the first woman nominated to the post. The other islands reflect the same situation where women are in the minority in their island councils. At the moment there is only 1 female island council member. The picture is a bit different on central level. The Netherlands Antilles has known five cabinets headed by women as Prime Ministers. The number of female ministers vary from cabinet to cabinet from 1 up to 4 in 2006 and at the present time there are 3 female ministers (including the Prime Minister). Of the 21 members of Parliament only two (2) are female".¹⁶ (9.5%) In the British Virgin Islands, the records show that between the Island Council and Parliamentary Elections, the variation is between 27% -33.3% of women being elected.

¹⁶ Excerpt from response to questionnaire for Women's Bureau- Directorate of Social Development, Netherlands Antilles.

No. of Women Elected in Selected Countries 1992-2006

Following from the preceding section, the question remains why are women selected faster than they are being elected. In the first instance it has to do with the number of women who come forward for nomination to run for public office, who the selectors are in terms of gender sensitivity, whether they are placed in safe or high risk seats and which party they belong too. These are just a few of the dynamics. Here, we can only look at how the female candidates have fared over time. During the period under review from 1992-2006 a total of 348 women ran as candidates in the elections of 12 countries. Of these only 102 or 29% were successful. Trinidad and Tobago fielded the highest number of candidates 87 and Antigua and Barbuda fielded the lowest number 7. The countries experiencing the highest success rates however have been St. Vincent and the Grenadines with 55.5%, Barbados with 41.6% and Jamaica and St. Kitts with 33.3% each (see Table 4 below).

Table 4
Number of Women Elected in selected countries (1992-2006)

Country	Total Number of Women Candidates	Number and percentage of Elected
Anguilla	9	0
Antigua and Barbuda	7	1 / 14.9
Barbados	24	10 / 41.7
Belize	16	5 / 31.3
The Bahamas	57	18 / 31.6
Dominica	20	5 / 20.0
Grenada	33	10 / 30.3
Jamaica	61	20 / 33.3
St.Kitts-Nevis	9	3 / 33.3
St. Lucia	16	4 / 26.6
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	9	5 / 55.5
Trinidad & Tobago	87	21 / 23.5

Source: Barrow –Giles, Walthrust-Jones & Gajadhar - Electoral Systems, Socio-economic Conditions and Gender Performance in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Presented at First Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Workshop UWI Jan 2007

Gender and Electoral Candidacy in Selected Countries 1992-2006

In every country of the Caribbean the men have far outnumbered the women as far as their selection as candidates is concerned. It is clear that insufficient attempts are made to encourage women to come forward as candidates and that there are deterrents, real or imagined to female participation. Some of these deterrents have been described as the burden of family responsibilities that is traditionally carried by women, the slanderous and corrupt nature of the politics particularly among the campaign process, the patriarchal political culture and the lack of financial and other kinds of support. Political parties must be sensitized to the need for balance in the gender distribution of candidates screened and selected to contest the elections. This has to be reinforced by the availability of financial and other kinds of support that will encourage the female candidates to come forward.

Between 1992 and 2006, 2736 candidates competed in the elections of the thirteen countries (including Montserrat). Of these, 2373 were men (86.7%) and 363 (13.2%) were women. Jamaica fielded the highest number of candidates (494) and Anguilla fielded the lowest (78); Jamaica was followed by Trinidad and Tobago with 405 and the Bahamas with 342. Within this

data set, women in Trinidad and Tobago formed the largest percentage of the total (21.4%) followed by the Bahamas with 15.6% and Jamaica with 12.3%. In this area we are still striving towards the 30% quota (see Table 5 below).

Table 5
Gender and Electoral Candidacy in Selected Countries 1992-2006

Country	Total Candidates	Male %	Female %
Anguilla	78	69 / 88.4	9 / 11.5
Antigua and Barbuda	122	116 / 95	6 / 4.9
Barbados	215	191 / 88.8	24 / 11.1
Belize	217	201 / 92.6	16 / 7.4
Bahamas	342	285 / 83.3	57 / 15.6
Dominica	165	145 / 87.8	20 / 12.1
Grenada	194	161 / 82.9	33 / 17.0
Jamaica	494	433 / 87.6	61 / 12.3
Montserrat	83	69 / 83.1	14 / 6.8
St. Kitts- Nevis	115	106 / 92.1	9 / 7.8
St. Lucia	167	151 / 91	16 / 8.9
St. Vincent & Grenada	139	128 / 92	11 / 7.9
Trinidad & Tobago	405	318 / 78.5	87 / 21.4
Total	2736	2373 / 86.7	363 / 13.2

Source: Barrow-Giles, Walthrust-Jones & Gajadhar- Electoral Systems, Socio-economic Conditions and Gender Performance in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Presented at First Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan 2007 Women Heads of State or Government- 1945-2000

Governor Generals/ Presidents

The pursuit of gender parity in politics and other decision making positions in the Caribbean gives cognizance to the fact that women are qualified not only to enter at the highest levels but to take up leadership roles at those levels as well. Therefore we are pleased to welcome women into the positions of President, Governor-General and Prime Minister, which seemed to be the domain of the men prior to September 1961 when Her Excellency Elmira Minita Gordon was appointed Governor General of Belize to serve until November 1993. Four other Caribbean women followed in her footsteps: Dames Ruth Nita Barrow of Barbados, Calliopa Pearlette Louisy of St. Lucia, Ivy Dumont of the Bahamas and Deborah Barnes-Jones, Montserrat. Only two countries have had elected female Presidents: Ertha Pascall-Trouillot of Haiti and Janet Jagan of Guyana.

Prime Ministers

Female Prime Ministers are a rare group in the world, relative to the men, and it is to the credit of the Caribbean that we have had women serve in this position in five Caribbean countries including Dominica, Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica. The Netherlands Antilles (Dutch speaking) has had five female Prime Ministers in its history. Although women are very active in the political life of most Caribbean countries, most are reluctant to form their own parties or vie for the position of Political Leader in the party to which they belong. Indeed, the politics of the position of “the Political Leader” is a whole new set of “politics within the politics” that women try to avoid. As a consequence not many women are positioning themselves for this status. Table 6 below shows a chronology of leadership at this level in the Caribbean.

Table 6
A Chronology of Women Heads of State or Government 1945-2005

Country	Name	Period
Elected Women Presidents		
Haiti	Ertha Pascal Trouillot	3 / 1990 – 2 / 1991
Guyana	Janet Jagan	12 / 1997 – 8 / 1999
Women Governor Generals		
Belize	Elmira Minita Gordon	9 / 1961 – 11 / 1993
Barbados	Ruth Nita Barrow	6 / 1990 – 12 / 1995
Saint Lucia	Calliopa Pearlette Louisy	9 / 1997 – 2005*
Bahamas	Ivy Dumont	1 / 2002 – 2005 *
Montserrat	Deborah Barnes -Jones	2004- present ?
Women Prime Ministers		
Dominica	Mary Eugenia Charles	7 / 1980 – 6 / 1995
Haiti	Claudette Werleigh	11 / 1995 – 2 / 1996
Guyana	Janet Jagan	3 / 1997 – 12 / 1997
Jamaica	Portia Simpson-Miller	2006- present

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union Women in Politics 1945-2005 Information Kit Data Sheet #4 from www.guide2womenleaders.com

Female Leaders of Parties

The chronology of female heads of state or government shown in Table 7 is a culmination of the courage, fortitude and pioneering spirit of several women who have been willing to not only make themselves available for public life but to take on the added challenge of being forefront leaders in their parties and countries. The heights that they have attained are testimony to the fact that they have found a way to overcome the obstacles that have stood in the path of women's ascendancy in the political realm over time. Their stories should be chronicled as case studies for those who are coming behind. But these are the outstanding ones who have been able to obtain control of state or government by election and nomination. There is a cadre of "heroines" who have played and are playing very significant roles in parties around the Caribbean. They are the pioneers who are being carried on the shoulders of the international agencies, the national machineries, the non-government organizations and the many feminist activists to open the floodgates to the achievement of the objective of gender parity in the future. Whether, they are all the answer to the question of "Why Women, What Politics?"¹⁷ is the subject of another analysis that should be undertaken.

The record shows up to 2006, 49 women throughout the Caribbean who have held positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman, Secretary-General, Opposition Leader, Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader, Parliamentary Leader of Party, Leader of Independent Business in the Senate, Opposition Whip, Government Whip and Party Founder and Co-founder. Interestingly, there are very few female founders of political parties. This author believes that a major breakthrough in the political culture and gender parity can result from gender-sensitive women taking this initiative. Appendix 2 refers.

¹⁷ Title of campaign /programme of the Network of Non-Government Organizations for the Advancement of Women in Trinidad and Tobago.

Profile of Women's Ministerial Participation by Term and Portfolio

An examination of the portfolios of female ministers in the Caribbean over the last three terms shows that women are slowly gaining access to the higher status portfolios that are not considered “soft”. While it remains true that most of the women are still given the “soft” portfolios such as Education, Consumer Affairs, Gender Affairs, Health, Sport and Youth, Culture, Community Development, Tourism, women have also penetrated the Ministries of Finance, Energy, Justice and Immigration, Transportation, Legal Affairs, Trade, Physical Development and the Environment, National Security, Economic Affairs, Labour, Local Government and Technology. It would be encouraging to see more women in Ministries of Infrastructural Development, Energy, Trade and Industry and Finance and the Economy. The comparison of the three terms also reveals that there was an improvement in numbers in Jamaica, Suriname, Barbados, the Turks and Caicos, Grenada and Bahamas between the first and most recent terms. Haiti experienced a significant regression while St. Marten and the Cayman islands experienced a small regression. The British Virgin Islands increased in the second term and reverted to their original position in the third. Dominica remained the same having experienced a temporary improvement in the second term (see appendix 3).

Women in Local Government

“The level of participation by women has been an area of concern since Beijing”, reported Hazel Brown to the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop. “Following the decision taken at the Commonwealth meeting in Dominica by Caribbean women to give special attention to local government, action was taken to increase their numbers and effectiveness, through training and community based support mechanisms.

Local government, is the level of government closest to the citizens and therefore in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions, and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development

Democracy cannot be realised without adequate representation, participation and inclusion of women in the local governance process. Democratic local self-government has a critical role to play in securing social, economic and political justice for all citizens all members of society, women and men, must be included in the governance process.”¹⁸ The question that begs to be answered is what exactly has the impact of women been on Local Government this far? What has changed since women began to participate in larger numbers in Local Government? Has the focus of Local Government changed? How are gender issues dealt with at this level?

Mayors

Women are woefully under-represented across the board in Mayoral and other similar positions in the Caribbean. Of 94 municipalities in 6 Caribbean countries only 10 were headed by women (11%) in the last two terms and the position is one of either miniscule incremental gain or regression from term to term. For example Jamaica experienced a regression in 2003 when they

¹⁸ Brown H- Paper on “Put a Woman” presented at the First Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop, UWI Jan.2007

experienced a decline from 3 in 1998 to 1. Belize moved from 11% in 2003-2006 to 22% in the period 2006-present. Incumbency ranges from 0-22%. In this area 30% seems to be a distant dream that would be realized only with a more concerted effort (see Table 7 below).

Table 7
Municipal Government: Mayors

Country	Period	Number of Municipalities or Localities	Candidates for Election as Mayor (Number and percentage)		Mayors Elected (Number and percentage)	
			Men	Women	Men	Women
Jamaica	2003	14	-	-	13	1 / 7.0
	1998	13	-	-	10	3 / 23.0
Suriname a/	2005-2015	10	-	-	10 / 90.9	1 / 9.1
Barbados d/	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Maarten b/	2003-2007	14	-	-	4 / 80.0	1 / 20.0
	1999-2003	14	-	-	4 / 80.0	1 / 20.0
Bahamas d/	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belize	2006-present	9	22 / 88.0	3 / 12.0	7 / 78.0	2 / 22.0
	2003-2006	9	18 / 90.0	2 / 20.0	8 / 89.0	1 / 11.0
Cayman Islands c/	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & the Grenadines d/	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dominica	2003	3	-	-	3 / 100.0	0
	2006	3	-	-	3 / 100.0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	2002-2007	5			5 / 100.0	0
Haiti	2006-present	9			112 / 86.0	18 / 14.0
	2001-2003	10			307 / 78.5	84 / 21.5

Source: Women's Bureaus

a/ No Mayoral Positions in Suriname only District Commissioners.

b/ St. Maarten is governed by an Island Council only with 11 members and 5 Commissioners

c/ Cayman Islands has one tier of Governance-The Legislative Assembly- No Mayoral System

d/ Barbados, Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada do not have this system of local government .

Councillors

The situation of councillors shows an improvement at the lower level of Local Government where some countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, and Suriname have attained the 30% quota. Jamaica has experienced a regression from 26.4% in 1998 to 16.3% in 2003. Dominica has been doing very well as far as the quota attainment is concerned reaching as high as 54% in one area and surpassing the WEDO call for 50% (see Table 8 below).

Table 8
Municipal Government: Councillors

Country	Period	Number of Municipalities or Localities	Candidates for Election as Municipal Officials (Number and percentage)		Municipal Officials Elected (Number and percentage)	
			Men	Women	Men	Women
Jamaica	2003 1998	227	-	-	190 / 83.7 167 / 73.5	37 / 16.3 60 / 26.4
Surinamea/	2005-2010	10	-	-	80 / 75.3	26 / 24.7
	2000-2005	10	-	-	86 / 81.9	19 / 18.1
	1996-2000	10	-	-	98 / 93.4	7 / 6.6
	2005-2010	-	-	-	509 / 68.8	225 / 31.2
	2000-2005	-	-	-	540 / 76.9	177 / 23.1
	1996-2000	-	-	-	573 / 89.3	134 / 10.7
Barbados	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Maarten b/	2003-2007	14	60 / 75.9	19 / 24.1	e/ 8 / 72.7 (Council Members)	3 / 27.3
	1999-2003	14	59 / 76.6	18 / 23.3	10 / 90.9	1 / 9.1
Bahamas	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belize	2006	67	-	-	-	-
	2003	-	106 / 75%	36 / 25.0	84 / 79%	22 / 61.0
Cayman Islands c/	2005-Present	6	d/ 36 / 76.5	11 / 23.4	e/ 12 / 80.0	3 / 20.0
	2000	6	43 / 75.4	14 / 24.6	13 / 86.6	2 / 13.3
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dominica	2003	13	-	-	46-64.0	36 / 54.0
Trinidad & Tobago	2002-2007	5	-	-	107	49 / 31.4
Haiti	2000-2003	132			1533 / 93.0	116 / 7.0

Source: Women's Bureaus

a/ Suriname has district councils in each district and a second level of local councils. Figures represent district councils & local councils

b/ St. Maarten is governed by an Island Council only with 11 members and 5 Commissioners

c/ Cayman Islands has one tier of Governance-The Legislative Assembly

d/ Figure represents candidates for the Legislative Assembly not for Mayors

e/ Figure represents number of persons elected to the National Assembly not Mayors.

Gender Parity in Decision-Making

It is easy to observe that there is much more information that is readily available on women's participation in politics than there is on women's participation in other decision making positions in the Caribbean. There is a need for continuous monitoring and publishing of the indicators for the purpose of assessing progress. There appears to be no systematic methodology laid down for this ongoing process in most Caribbean countries so that the information when it does appear could hardly be compared and it is difficult to assess progress.

Women in Senior Management Positions 1999 and 2006

There are too many countries in the Caribbean at the present time for which no data is available on women in senior management positions. For those for which data are available the information is lumped together and not sector specific. Where information exists however, it is very encouraging because it shows an increase over time of women in senior decision making positions. A study conducted by Roselyn Paul, Research Officer of the Women's Bureau in

Dominica, confirmed that “women continued to be under represented in areas of power and decision making but showed a change in trend, an increase for example in the number of female permanent secretaries and in a few management positions within the private sector. It was revealed though that the predecessors of these female permanent secretaries had moved up to higher positions within the country or to regional institutions giving credence to an apparent and continued glass ceiling. In addition composition of statutory boards, own account workers and policy directorates and political leadership showed women representation or participation to remain minimal”.¹⁹

A review of the position in 1999 and 2006 reveals that the percentages are lower for women at the highest levels of Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers than it is for women at the next lower level of Female Professionals and Technical Workers. The good news is that at the highest level we are seeing the 30% quota being met and surpassed in countries like the Bahamas, Belize, Suriname in 1999 and in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago in 2006. In all instances there was progress except in the case of Belize who experienced a regression.

At the level of Female Professionals and Technical Workers, the 30% quota was surpassed in all countries for which data was available. As a matter of fact both the 30% and 50% quotas were surpassed in four countries in 1999 and 2006. Suriname experienced a regression but was still able to exceed 50% in 2006 (see Table 9 below).

Table 9
Women in Senior Management Positions
(In percentages)

Country	Year			
	1999		2006	
	Female Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	Female Professionals and Technical Workers	Female Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	Female Professionals and Technical Workers
Barbados	--	--	43.0	52.0
Bahamas	34.8	51.4	40.0	--
St. Kitts & Nevis	--	--	--	--
Grenada	--	--	--	--
Belize	36.6	38.8	31.0	52.0
Trinidad and Tobago	23.3	53.3	38.0	54.0
Dominica	36.5	66.8	--	--
Suriname	13.3	69.0	28.0	51.0
St. Lucia	--	--	--	--
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	--	--	--	--
Guyana	12.8	47.5	--	--
Jamaica	--	--	--	--
Haiti	--	--	--	--
Antigua and Barbuda	--	--	--	--
Cuba	18.5	47.8	--	--

Source: Human Development Report 2006.

Note: -- No available data.

¹⁹ Paul R. Report on the Academic Achievement of Dominican Women and Access to Power and Decision Making: Exploring the Underlying Factors for Women's Under Representation- Women's Bureau of Dominica.

Employment Status of Women

A review of the employment status of women in employment is an indication that there is gender imbalance in the positions of men and women with more men holding decision making positions of employers and own account workers. Caribbean societies are characterized by a heavy presence of single parent families led by women. The women are therefore largely responsible for making decisions in the home. The corollary to that is that they should also be in positions of influence outside of the home because the decisions that are made in the political arena and in the workplace have a direct impact on their circumstances in the household unit. In spite of this, the majority of women are found as employees, a category in which they outnumber the men by far. The Dominican study articulates the situation well in citing Bailey's (2000) analysis "In spite of their overall higher levels of educational participation and attainment, Caribbean women, as a group continue to be predominantly clustered in the lower paying sectors of the labor market; experience higher levels of unemployment, have less access to productive resources, are under represented in all areas of governance including representational politics and decision making positions and processes."²⁰

The Study also explored some causes by stating that "analysis of existing data also demonstrated the continuance of **a gendered school system** reflected in sex bias in subject choices and courses, gender stereotyping and also **sexual division of labor** in the economy implying that these may play a part in the positions taken and held by women according to these theories presented in literature review.

Interviewees' responses also suggested that some of the **management structures, practices and procedures** barred or posed difficulties for the upward mobility of some of these women. These included lack of effective succession and career development planning, de-motivation of employees, being superseded without sufficient value placed on experience and adequate resource support to get the disadvantaged qualified and gaps which allow personal issues to impact on decisions" (see Table 10 below).

Table 10
Distribution of Labour Force by Status in Employment

Country	Year	Employees		Employers		Own Account Workers	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bahamas	1995	88	83	-	-	-	-
Barbados	2003	91	80	0	1	8	18
Belize	1999	71	62	-	-	25	34
Dominica	1997	71	61	6	15	19	22
Jamaica	2003	69	58	1	3	27	38
St. Lucia	2000	71	59	3	7	24	31
Trinidad and Tobago	2002	82	74	3	6	12	18

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww> 2005/tab5e: United Nations Statistics Division-Demographic and Social statistics.

²⁰ Paul R. Report on the Academic Achievement of Dominican Women and Access to Power and Decision Making: Exploring the Underlying Factors for Women's Under Representation- Women's Bureau of Dominica.

Women in Decision-Making Positions in the Public Sector 2001 & 2007

The fact that we have surpassed the 30% quota for permanent secretaries in CARICOM is something to celebrate since this is a very senior managerial position that sends the right signals for gender parity at this level. In 2000-2001, the statistics showed that women made up 45% of this group in the Caribbean. In only three islands in 2007, this figure rose to 47%. The picture in individual islands is also very positive. Jamaica had 50% women in this position in 2003 and 2004 and 43% in 2007. Trinidad and Tobago also has a high percentage of female Permanent Secretaries. Dominica showed good progress in this area by moving from 22% in 2001 to 45% in 2006 and 55.5% in 2007. Another cause for celebration is the placement of a woman as Governor of the Central Bank. The record for 2000/2001 shows that of the two positions, one is held by a woman. There was overall gender imbalance shown in the positions of Heads of Civil Service, Commissioners of Service, Directors of Departments and Advisors in CARICOM in 2001. While there was no change for Heads of Civil Service and Commissioners of Services in 2007, there was a significant improvement in the posts of Directors of Departments and Advisors in three countries where the 30% quota was surpassed.

This translates into a similar picture at the national level. Dominica had a poor showing for Heads of Public Services, Commissioners of Services and Directors of Departments but improved greatly on Advisors from 0% to 50% in 2006. Jamaica showed a trend reversal in the position of Chief Executive Officer where the women outnumbered the men between 2003-2005 7 to 2. Director General posts in Jamaica were consistent with male domination but improved in 2005 from a 4:1 to 3:2 ratio. Women held their own as Commissioners 50% but fell in 2005 to 25%. An encouraging feature of the Jamaican landscape is that traditionally male dominated senior positions experienced a shift to female leadership. While the Chief Personnel Officer, the Solicitor General, the Director of Public prosecutions remained in the hands of the men, we saw women holding positions of Government Chemist, Accountant General, Chief Parliamentary Counsel and Conservator of Forests. The position of Postmaster General, which was held by a woman went back to the men in 2005.

The men outnumbered the women on Boards of Directors in a sample of statutory organizations in Jamaica 70% to 30%. In 2004. In Dominica women were outnumbered on Statutory Boards 85% to their 15%. The competition for top posts in the Public Service is based on merit and seniority and is influenced by a host of other barriers, so it is understandable that the progress towards gender parity in this area is not as swift as we would like it to be. However, selection to a Board of Directors is dependent on the political directorate. It is therefore fitting to conclude that where imbalances still exist and quotas are not met, there is need for a deeper commitment and political will on the part of the political directorate to gender parity. Women also need to step up to the plate in terms of participation in the power networks and the political negotiations that take persons to the seats in those Board rooms (see Table 11 and 12 below).

Table 11
Women in Senior Decision-Making Positions - Public Sector

Selected Senior-Level Positions in the Government Service in CARICOM- Details by Position-2000/2001						
	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Head of Public/Civil Service	1	3	4	25	75	100
Permanent Secretaries	34	41	75	45	55	100
Governors of the Central Bank	1	1	2	50	50	100
Commissioners of Service	0	8	8	0	100	100
Directors of Departments	11	27	38	29	71	100
Advisors	0	3	3	0	100	100
Total	47	83	133	36	64	100

Source: CARICOM 2003, "Women and Men in CARICOM Member States: Power and Decision-Making 1980-2002", Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, June 2003.

Table 12
Women in Senior Decision-Making Positions - Public Sector 2007*

Positions	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Head of Public/Civil Service a/	2	8	10	20	80	100
Permanent Secretaries	22	25	47	47	53	100
Governors of the Central Bank b/	0	1	1	0	100	100
Commissioners of Service c/	0	5	5	0	100	100
Directors of Departments d/	53	78	131	40	60	100
Advisors e/	2	3	5	40	60	100
Total	79	120	199	40	60	100

Source: Women's Bureaus response to questionnaire from the author.

a/ This table consists of data from St. Kitts & Nevis, Jamaica and Dominica only. Nine of these positions are from Public Service Companies in Jamaica and the other position is from Dominica.

b/ This position of Central Bank Governor is in St. Kitts and Nevis.

c/ Data for Commissioners of Services are from St. K&N. and Dominica only.

d/ Figure for Directors of Departments are from St. Kitts & Nevis and Dominica only.

e/ Data on Advisors from St. Kitts & Nevis only.

Women in Senior Management Positions in the Private Sector

This is an area that needs to be worked on regarding the collection of data. What is available however suggests that the men outnumber the women 3:1. In Dominica for example, in 2001, 61% of the senior management positions in the private sector were held by the men and 39% by the women. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the same year, 72% were held by the men and 28% by the women. By 2002 however, SVG attained the 30% quota and climbed to 35% in 2005, then fell to 33% in 2006. Suriname in 2004 had men holding 67% of their management positions and women 33% (see Table 13 below).

Women in Executive Positions in Trade Unions-2007

Trade Unionism is a field in which the women of the Caribbean have made significant strides from the days when the men dominated the top positions. In the three islands from which data was forthcoming, the 30% quota was substantially surpassed. St. Kitts and Nevis topped this group with 57%, Dominica had 44% and Jamaica had 39%. The spectrum of positions held is also impressive because no position in the Trade Unions seems to be out of reach of the women who have taken full control of the Teacher's Unions where they are in the majority (see Table 14 below).

Table 13
Senior Management Positions in the Private Sector
(In percentage)

Country	Total	Year											
		2001	2002		2003		2004	2005		2006			
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Dominica	24,811	39	61		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	7452	28	72	30	70	31	69	33	67	35	65	33	67%

Source: Women's Bureaus of Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Table 14
Women in Executive Positions in Trade Unions

Country	No. of Trade Unions	No. of Executive Positions	No. of Women in Executive Positions	% of Women in Executive Positions	Portfolios
St. Kitts & Nevis	3	35	20	57	Presidents, Vice Presidents, PROs, Treasurer, Trustees, General Sec, Floor Members
Dominica	4	42	19	44	Presidents, Vice Pres., Trustees, Commission Members, Secretary, General Secretaries
Jamaica	14	259	102	39%	Board Members, 1 President, 3 General Secretaries

Women Holding Cabinet Positions 2004 & 2007

The Cabinet of the government is the real decision-making body of the Executive. It is here that the decisions generated are taken to the Parliament. It is therefore a very important arena for women's participation and true gender based democracy. Participation in cabinet is at the behest of the Prime Minister and his selection is often related to those Ministers deemed to be holding the most important positions. The Cabinets of the Caribbean are a reflection of the still marginal participation of women in politics. Of the countries for which data is available in 2004, none have attained the 30% quota. The Bahamas led with 25% followed by Trinidad and Tobago with 21% and Jamaica just past the half-way mark with 17.6%. Dominica had no women in the Cabinet and Belize had only one or 3%. For the countries for which information was available in 2007 Dominica acquired one female member of Cabinet and Jamaica remained with three even though the total number of Cabinet positions decreased by four. Trinidad and Tobago increased by two and went to 26% in 2007 (see Table 15 below).

Table 15
Women Holding Cabinet Positions in the Caribbean 2004

Country	2004 (Numbers)	2004 (%)	Portfolios	2007 (Numbers)	2007 (%)	Portfolios
Bahamas	4/16	25%	National security, Financial Services and Investment, Social Security and Community Development, Transport and Aviation	-	-	-
Belize	1/13	3	Moved from Min of Defense and National Security to Min. of Human Development	-	-	-
Dominica	0/8	0		1/14	7	Junior Minister Tourism
Jamaica	3/17	17.6	Community Development & Sports, Industry and Tourism, Education and Culture.	3/13	23	Prime Minister,
Trinidad and Tobago	4/19	21	Leg. Aff., Ed. Comm.Dev. and Gender Aff., Cult. & Tourism.	6/23	26	P&D., Ed., Leg. Aff., Comm.Dev. Pub. Util., Fin.

Source 2004: Mohammed P. in Paper on Adding Women and Stirring Issues in Gender and Parliamentary Representation in the Caribbean taken from Vassel L. & Vassel Women in Power and Decision Making in the Caribbean, Fourth Ministerial Conference on Women, St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2003 pg.8. 2007-Women's Bureaus & Cabinet Secretariat for Trinidad and Tobago.

Women in Senior Positions in the Judiciary 2007

Three countries responded to requests for this data, Dominica, Jamaica and St. Kitts & Nevis. The position of women in senior positions in the judiciary in these islands was very positive in that in some instances the one key position was held by a woman. For example the post of Chief Magistrate was held by a woman in Dominica and St. Kitts/Nevis. The post of Attorney General was held by a woman in Dominica only. The post of Chief Parliamentary Counsel was held by a woman in Jamaica only. Both Dominica and St. Kitts/Nevis had women in the post of Chief

State Solicitor. Women had a strong showing of 100% in Dominica in the posts of Chief Magistrate, Chief State solicitor and Attorney General and formed 33% of the magisterial cadre. In St. Kitts/Nevis there was also a strong showing of 100% in the posts of Chief Magistrate, Director of Public Prosecutions, Senior Parliamentary Counsel, Magistrates, Masters and Senior State Counsels. Seventy eight (78%) of the Counsels in Dominica were women in 2007. In Jamaica, 100% was achieved in the post of Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Women in the posts of Senior Parliamentary Counsels and Parliamentary Counsels were 67% & 83% respectively. They were 68% of Crown Counsels and 75% of Assistant crown Counsels in Jamaica in 2007. The 30% quota was also surpassed in the posts of Deputy and Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions, Senior Resident and Resident Magistrates Judges of Appeal and Puisne Judges. Generally the quota of 30% has been attained in the three islands.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper concludes that there has been progress in women's political participation in the Caribbean and gender parity in decision making processes in the past ten years in the Caribbean and that all the measures that have been utilized have made a contribution to this progress. Overall however, we must note the following challenges and their recommended solutions:

1. That the Caribbean as a whole has not yet attained the 30% quota average that the countries have committed themselves to.
2. That there is a lag in both political will and results in the areas of (i) selection of women to Boards of Directors, (ii) programmes to increase support for female politicians in the areas of campaign financing and other kinds of support. (iii) the enforcement of quota legislation (iv) integration of accountability into national machineries
3. That there are significant gaps in the production of the results indicators which need to be stepped up especially in the areas of senior positions in the public and private sectors by type of business, the position of women in Trade Unions, Cabinet, on the Executive of Political Parties, in the Judiciary and in Ambassadorial posts.
4. That the research agenda is lagging both in output and structure. There is a need to begin to conduct a rigorous assessment of the impact of women on the politics and leadership spaces of the Caribbean to qualify and define scientifically exactly what women have been bringing and can or should bring to the political and leadership table in Parliament, Local Government, NGOs and in public and private sector organizations. The research should also look at the present impact of the inequality on the political culture of countries in the Caribbean. The availability of research expertise and software in the Bureaus must also be considered and addressed.
5. That the monitoring and evaluation capacity of Women's Bureaus are weak and needs to be upgraded so that the impact of policies and programmes to enhance women's political and decision making participation and other forms of gender parity can be measured.

6. That there is insufficient reference material that gives an insight into the journey of the women who have made it to the top. The case studies of women in top leadership positions ought to be documented.
7. That there is a tardiness in the conversion of international commitments into national law and also to incorporate actions to be taken into job descriptions for relevant personnel.
8. That party politics, the emergence of the concept of “male marginalization” and the shift from women and development to gender and development has weakened the women’s agenda. We must find ways and means to continue to highlight the inequities and their impacts through public awareness and to have them addressed.
9. That the Caribbean countries are too dependent on political will and non-legal measures for the attainment of gender parity and ought to consider quota legislation more closely; only that the quota should be raised to fifty percent.
10. That the expertise to conduct a gendered assessment of policies is lacking in most women who become politically active and should be available to them as part of the training package.

Other recommendations emanating from national reports include:

11. Review systems of selection for top job positions especially in senior positions in the public sector.
12. Improve Succession Planning, Career Development Planning & strengthen upward appraisal to remove seeming dissatisfaction within public sector especially as regards lack of value placed on experience and commitment which puts women in middle management at a disadvantage, and provide more opportunities/facilities for training to upgrade self especially for mature women who have already gained much experience in the service but due to commitments are unable to avail themselves of costly training or to travel to distant institutions to do so.
13. Improve career and vocational guidance and encourage women in non-traditional areas.
14. Train women in leadership and policy formulation: Gender sensitization and training of persons in key positions of influence.
15. Encourage /facilitate more women’s participation at the international level e.g.
16. Need to disseminate information to rural women on rights, responsibilities and opportunities and to provide facilities to remove constraints to economic development; and for gender friendly policies.
17. Sensitize public support for women in politics, present women as candidates for general election and engage more women in dialogue on global issues.

18. Represent gender issues at national level and promote political debate around these issues.
19. Use local government election as a training ground for women preparing for national level politics.
20. Encourage women's arms of political parties to lobby and groom women for public office.
21. Encourage young women to pursue political careers; Family has great influence as a major institution of socialization. The family should expose children to multiple roles.
22. Review of the political processes e.g. to reduce risk of job security when men and women decide to serve their country at the highest level; it seems they are being penalized for that decision.
23. Adopt the Commonwealth Secretariat proposal to work at achieving the target 30% representation by 2015 and uphold the millennium development Goals.
24. Seek to change cultural environment- create a supportive environment geared at changing the mindset of society and to encourage them to be more issue oriented.
25. Education on politics through the formal education system and encourage persons especially women to see politics as a profession.
26. As a society we must set standards, have positive role models; highlight the successes and contributions of women in decision making.
27. Further Research: To better understand Human resource management processes and practices and employees outlook; and also discussions with members of the public to explore the issues further such as those emanating from the private sphere, attitudes towards women and men in leadership, power and decision making.
28. But above all women themselves must rise to the challenge despite the perceived difficulties, for it is only when gender sensitive women get into key positions that they are better able to help transformation.
29. Legislate for a quota policy from the selection of candidates to appointment to political positions.
30. To empower and support those female politicians who want to organize their own campaign to gain more preferential votes.
31. To lobby for an alteration of the Electoral Regulation to make the sex of nominees visible on the nominee lists and the voting papers.

32. To lobby for sex disaggregated data in all official election reports
33. To produce media portraits of female political leaders of National Assembly, District Councils, Regional Councils who gave a good example.
33. More women to participate in the writing of election programmes for their own benefit.

Table 16
Proposal for a Plan of Action for Increasing Gender Parity
in Politics and Decision Making Processes

Strategic Goal	Objective	Critical Success Factors	Responsibilities	Timeline
(1) To increase the quota for women's participation in politics and decision making to 50% in all institutions.	To utilize legal measures to enhance participation	Cooperation between government and opposition	All responsibilities to be articulated in National Gender Plans of Action	To be decided upon
(2) To strengthen the national machineries to facilitate gender equality in politics and decision making.	(2.1) To upgrade the research infrastructure (2.2) To increase research output (2.3) To improve monitoring and evaluation capacity	(2.11) Availability of personnel and financing (2.1a) Political will and availability of resources (2.2) Clarity regarding research opportunities (2.3) Availability of resources Critical Success Factors	“	
		(2.3a) proper identification of information needed (2.3b) Expertise		
(3) To strengthen stakeholder commitments to international agreements	(3.1) To convert the international agenda into national law	(3.1) Cooperation of Government and Opposition		
(4) To improve on the contributions of women leaders in politics and other decision making processes	(4.1) Increase women's share of campaign financing and make available other kinds of support	(4.1) Commitment of all stakeholders		
	(4.2) To upgrade expertise of female candidates in politics generally and particularly in analyzing policy from a gender perspective	(4.2) Willingness of candidates to participate		
(5) To make information on female leaders available for reference	(5.1) To give an insight into the journey, strengths and challenges of female leaders	Funding		

APPENDIX 1

DOMINICA

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM IDENTIFIED REPORTS

- While there has been a positive trend reflected in increased numbers of female permanent secretaries and this should be commended there was a sense of frustration, de-motivation and demoralization at some levels of the public service. Review systems of selection for top job positions especially in senior positions in the public sector.
- Improve Succession Planning, Career Development Planning & strengthen upward appraisal to remove Seeming dissatisfaction within public sector especially as regards lack of value placed on experience and commitment which puts women in middle management at a disadvantage, and provide more opportunities/facilities for training to upgrade self especially for mature women who have already gained much experience in the service but due to commitments are unable to avail themselves of costly training or to travel to distant institutions to do so.
- Need to improve career and vocational guidance and employers should encourage women in non-traditional areas.
- Train women in leadership and policy formulation: Gender sensitization and training of persons in key positions of influence policy and skills in gender analysis to ensure that policies and programmes benefit all social groups.
- Need to encourage /facilitate more women participation at the international level e.g. ambassadorial and international representation - good way to set foundation for increased involvement in decision making.
- Need to disseminate information to rural women on rights, responsibilities and opportunities and to provide facilities to remove constraints to economic development; and for gender friendly policies.
- Sensitize public support for women in politics, present women as candidates for general election and engage more women in dialogue on global issues.
- Represent gender issues at national level and promote political debate around these issues
- Use local government election as a training ground for women preparing for national level politics.
- Encourage women's arms of political parties to lobby and groom women for public office
- Encourage young women to pursue political careers; Family has great influence as a major institution of socialization. The family should expose children to multiple roles.
- Review of the political processes e.g. to reduce risk of job security when men and women decide to serve their country at the highest level; it seems they are being penalized for that decision.
- Adopt the Commonwealth Secretariat proposal to work at achieving the target 30% representation by 2015 and uphold the millennium development Goals.
- Seek to change cultural environment- create a supportive environment within the family and community; Intensive public awareness geared at changing the mindset of society and to encourage them to be more issue oriented.
- Education on politics through the formal education system and encourage persons especially women to see politics as a profession.

- As a society we must set standards, have positive role models; highlight the successes and contributions of women in decision making.
- Further Research: To better understand Human resource management processes and practices and employees outlook; and also discussions with members of the public to explore the issues further such as those emanating from the private sphere, attitudes towards women and men in leadership, power and decision making.
- But above all women themselves must rise to the challenge despite the perceived difficulties, for it is only when gender sensitive women get into key positions that they are better able to help transformation.

In sum it is apparent that we all are to play a role in changing the structures of society, to create gender balance to better influence policy and address issues that affect women, men, children and families in Dominica.

SURINAME

Political participation and gender parity

1. Gelijke toegang; participatie van de vrouw in politiek en bestuur (Equal Access; participation of women in politics and management) by Mr. J.K. Joemmanbaks, Paramaribo, January 2005. Recommendations/ suggestions from this study:

- The rights of women should be “voiced” within the political Organizations. For example: the establishment of a women council within the political party with specific statutory competence.
- An independent Women council at national level can be installed, which will test the advancement of women in politics and management and report it to human rights organizations.
- To adopt a quorum model. But first the aspect of gender equality in the composition of bodies in politics and management should be established in the constitution.

2. Analysis of political party programs which participated in the elections, conducted by RehannaHasnoe for the Women’s Parliament Forum (WPF), August 2005. Conclusion/ Suggestions/ Recommendations:

- The conclusion is that the awareness campaign of the WPF did have effect on the society, but according to the extent that gender and female aspects have been incorporated in the different programs of the political parties, the effect in practice has been minimal. Although the election programs have some gender aspects there was no equal division between the male and female candidates for parliament. Not even one women has been chosen by preference during the election of 2005, while at least 2 men were chosen with preference.
- Women have to become able to step forward and help to write election programs for their own benefit. Women’s affairs should not be managed as overall social care, because women have to overbridge the process of being neglected.
- In the coming period it is important for WPF to examine all the key positions in the society and to educate these persons (men and women) so that they can bring over the message of equality.

3. Onderzoek: Proces benoeming vrouwen in het Kabinet 2005-2010 conducted by Vrouwen Parlement Forum (Research: Process about the nomination of women in the cabinet 2005-2010). Conclusion/ recommendation:

- Despite the unsatisfactory electoral profit for our women we can notice that women take almost 50% of the management functions in the decision making process. There is a clear progress in the action of Surinamese career women. To know more about how the women have reached these results, we should make an indepth study about these women above 40 as this group is small but has taken a stabile social position. It is clear that women have reached to these heights in their live by their own with very little strength or empowering of their partner. This has been said by the interviewed women themselves. The interviewed women say that we should work on professional childcare and after school education and guidance of children. The taking care function must be divided with both partners. Especially the youth should be educated about their future functioning in the society, where men and women are equal in the society.

4. Analyse van de resultaten van de algemene, vrije, geheime verkiezingen van 1996, 2000 en 2005 (Analysis of the results of the general, free and confidential elections) conducted by Henna Guicherit, WPF, September 2005):

- As a result of the May 25th 2005 general elections in the Republic of Suriname 25% of the members of the National Assembly are women, as are 24.5% of the District Council members and 30.6 % of the members of the councils of the administrative jurisdictions. Neither the target of 50/50 nor a critical mass of 33.3% of women in the representative bodies ia reached due to variety of factors of which sexism is one of them. Comparing the results of the 2005 elections with those of former elections, there is however some progress. The recommendations:

- Not only lobbies for more female nominees on electable positions, but also for a quota policy starting from the moment nominees are put forward
- To empower and support those female politicians who want to organize their own campaign to gain more preferential votes.
- To lobby for an alteration of the Electoral Regulation to make the sex of nominees visible on the nominee lists and the voting papers.
- To lobby for sex disaggregated data in all official election reports
- To produce media portraits of female political leaders of National Assembly, District Councils, Regional Councils who gave a good example.

APPENDIX 2: FEMALE LEADERS OF PARTIES

Country	Number of Leaders	Name	Position & Year	Year of Last Update
Barbados	2	Billie Miller	Senate Opposition Leader, 1986-89 Deputy Leader of Labour, 1990 Vice Chairperson, 1999-2000 Party Chairperson, 2000	29-06-2003
		Mia Motley	Secretary General of Barbados Labour Party, 2001 Senator, 1991-94 MP-Barbados Labour Party, 1994 – Minister of Education, Culture and Youth 1994-2001, Attorney General, 2001 Minister of Home Affairs – Leader of the House – Member of the National Security Council and the Barbados Defence Board – Deputy Prime Minister, 2003	
Cuba	1	Yadira Garcia Vera Matanzas	First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Provincial Committee, 1993	07-07-2004
Dominica	2	Phyllis B.S. Alfrey	Leader of the Labour Party, 1961-65	07-07-2004
		M. Eugenia Charles	Chairman of the Liberal Party, 1965-93 Leader of the Opposition, 1975-80, Prime Minister, 1980-95	
Grenada	2	Winifred Strachen	Leader of the Opposition, 1990-95	23-02-2003
		Joan Purcell	Acting leader of the National Democratic Congress, 1998-99	
Guyana	5	Janet Jagan	Secretary of People's Progressive Party (PPP), 1950-93 Co-leader of the Party, 1993 Prime Minister, 1997 President, 1997-99	14-08-2006
		Winifred Gaskin	Chairperson of People's National Congress, 1962-70	
		Pat MacKensie	Secretary General of People's National Congress, 1994-98	
		Deborah Backer	Vice-Chairperson of PNP, 2003 Former Senator and at present MP,	
		Shiela Holder	Vice-Chairperson of The Alliance for Change, 2006	

Country	Number of Leaders	Person	Position & Year	Year of Last Update
Haiti	4	Marie-Colette Jacques	President of the Party for the Integral Advance of the Haitian People, 1990	27-01-2006
		Marie-France Claude	Chairman of Haitian Christian Democratic Party, 1991–	
		Maude Thymothee	Leader of an Opposition Movement, 1994-95 Secretary of State of Social Affairs, 1992-94 Minister of Social Affairs, 1994 (Killed 1995)	
		Judie Joe C. Marie Roy	Leader of Parti Regroupement Patriotique pour le Renouveau National (REPAREN), 2003	
Jamaica	10	Rose Agatha Leon	Chairman of the Labour Party, 1948-60 (Minister of ? twice during this time)	26-09-2006
		Enid Bennett	Deputy Leader of Labour Party, 1978-83	
		Portia Simpson Miller	Deputy President of People's National Party, 1978-2006 Party Leader, 2006 Member of the government, 1976-82,1989-91, 1999 to present Prime Minister, 2006 to present	
		Maxine Henry-Wilson	Secretary General of the People's National Party (PNP), 1995-2001 Vice-Chairperson of PNP, 2001	
		Joan Gordon-Webley	Vice-President of National Democratic Movement, 1995 Former MP and Senator –	
		Hyacinth Bennett	Vice-President of National Democratic Movement, 2003 Leader and President of the NDM, 2002-03	
		Olivia "Babsy" Grange	Deputy Leader of Jamaica Labour Party, 2000-03	
		Dorothy Lightbourne	Vice-Chairperson Jamaica Labour Party, 2000-03 Deputy President of Senate, since 1989 Shadow Minister, since 1999	
		Antonnette Haughton-Cardenas	Leader of the United People's Party, 2001	
		Angela Brown-Burke	Vice-President of the People's National Party, 2006	

Country	Number of Leaders	Person	Position & Year	Year of Last Update
Montserrat	1	Roslyn Casell-Sealy	Leader of The Movement for Change and Prosperity (M-CAP) , 2003 Opposition MP, since 2003	13-06-2006
Saint Christopher & Nevis	2	Andrea Procope ----- Iris Howell	Leader of Nevis National Party, 1987– ----- Secretary General of People's Action Movement, 1992-94	09-07-04
Surinam	6	Marijke Djawalapersad ----- Marlyn Aaron-Denz ----- Jennifer Simons-Geerlings ----- C. Linger-Van Der Zie ----- Yvonne Reine Antoniette (Wonny) Rawales-Resida ----- Monique Essed-Fernandes	Vice-President of Basispartij voor Democratie en Vernieuwing (BVD), 1996-2000 Leader of Naya Kadam (New Choice), 2000-03 Deputy Leader of Unie van Progressieve Surinamers (UPS), 2003 Co-founder of BVD, Chairperson of the Nationale Assemblée, 1996-2000 ----- Vice-Chairperson of Partij voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid, 1999 ----- Parliamentary Leader of Millennium Combinatie, 2000-05 Parliamentary Leader of DNP, 2005 ----- Deputy Parliamentary Leader of Millennium Combinatie, 2000-05 ----- Parliamentary Leader of Nationaal Democratisch Partij/2000 Faction, 2000-05 Minister of Regional Development, 1996-2000 Minister of Justice and Police, 1999-2000 ----- Leader of the Partij voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid, 2000-02	19-12-2006
Trinidad & Tobago	10 Total (1-6)	Isabel Ursula Cadogan Teshea ----- Jennifer U. Johnson ----- Hulsie Bhaggan ----- Dr. Linda Baboolal -----	Vice-Chairperson of Peoples National Movement (PNM), 1956-61 ----- Secretary General of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), 1991 ----- -- Leader and Founder of Movement for Unity and Progress, 1994 ----- Chairman of Peoples National Movement, 1996-2002 ----- Deputy Leader of Peoples National Movement, 1996	27-06-2004

		<p>----- Joan Yuille-Williams -----</p> <p>----- Nafessa Mohammed -----</p>	<p>----- -- Deputy Leader of the Opposition (PNM) in the Senate, 1996 Deputy Party Leader – Senator, until 2001. Chairperson of People's Empowerment Party, 1999-2001 -----</p>	Year of Last Update
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Country	Number of Leaders	Person	Position & Year	27-06-2004
The Bahamas	3	<p>Theresa Moxey-Ingraham -----</p> <p>Cynthia Pratt -----</p> <p>Sylvia Eureneth Schriener -----</p>	<p>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, 1986-92 Government Minister, since 1992 -----</p> <p>----- Opposition Whip (PLD) 1992-2000 Deputy Leader of the Progressive Liberal Democratic Party, 2000 Deputy Leader of the Opposition, 2000-02 Deputy Prime Minister, 2002 ----- Government Whip (House of Representatives for the Free National Movement Party), 1992-2002</p>	17-03-2006
Turks and Caicos Islands	1	Lillian E. Robinson-Been	<p>Deputy Leader of the Opposition, 2003 Deputy Leader of Progressive National Party, 2003</p>	

APPENDIX 3

Following is a recommended draft plan of action for attaining gender parity in politics and decision -making in the Caribbean. The recommendations contain the overriding strategic goals that should be accomplished, the means of accomplishing them and the factors that would be critical to their success. It is also recommended that a schedule of responsibilities be determined by the National Women's/Gender Machineries and included in the National Gender Plans. Time lines for completion would also be worked out by each machinery.

Profile of Women's Ministerial Participation by Term and Portfolio

Country	Term 3	Portfolio	Term 2	Portfolio	Term 1	Portfolio
Jamaica	3/ 21.4%	Prime Minister, Education & Youth, Tourism, Entertainment & Culture	2/ 11.7%	Local Government, Community Development & Sports; Industry & Tourism;	1/ 6.6%	Labour, Social Security & Sports
Suriname	3/ 17.6%	Transport, Communication & Tourism; Labour, Technological Development and Environment; External Affairs	2/ 12.5%	Home Affairs; External Affairs	1/ 6.2%	Regional Development
Barbados	5*	Economic Affairs & Development; Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade; Energy & the Environment; Commerce, Consumer Affairs & Business; State, Education, Youth Affairs & Sport.	4*	Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade; Attorney General & Home Affairs; Physical Development & Environment; State, Education, Youth Affairs & Sport	3	Foreign Affairs, Tourism & International Transport; Education, Youth Affairs & Culture; Health & the Environment.
Country	Term 3	Portfolio	Term 2	Portfolio	Term 1	Portfolio
St. Maarten	1/ 20%*	Education; Finance; Constitutional Affairs; Airport Affairs; Women's Affairs	1/ 20%	Education, Culture & Youth Affairs; Finance; Women's Affairs; Constitutional Affairs; Legal Affairs; Government Information Services.	3/ 20%*	Government Information Services, Women's Affairs, Telecommunications, Census, General and Legal Affairs, Finance, Education, Culture and Social Affairs, Personnel Affairs; Fire Dept. & Disaster Management, Housing, Environment, Central Security, Fight Against Drug Use; Education, Culture & Youth Affairs, Labour, Government Information Services, General Affairs, Personnel Affairs
Bahamas	4/ 25%	Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of National Security; Social Services	2/ 15.3%	Foreign Affairs; Public Service & Cultural Affairs	3/ 23%	Justice & Immigration, Social Development & National Insurance, Health & the

		&Community Development; Transport &Aviation; Financial Services &Investment				Environment
Belize	-		-		-	
Cayman Islands	0/ 0%	-	1/ 20%	Community Development, Women's Aff. Portfolio	*1/ 20%	Community Development, Youth & Culture, Sports, Portfolio
Country	Term 3	Portfolio	Term 2		Term 1	
				Youth and Sports		Women's Affairs
St. V S&G	-		-		-	-
Dominica	1*	Without Portfolio	2	Health; Community Development and Women's Affairs	1	Prime Minister & Minister of Tourism
Haiti	2/10.5%	Female Condition and Women's Rights, Culture and Communication	2/33.3%	Female Condition, Public Health and Population, Culture and Communication, Tourism	4/ 23.5%	Tourism, Social Affairs, Public Health, Female Affairs and Women's Rights
BVI	1/ 14.2%	Natural Resources and Labour	2/28.5%	Health and Welfare, Deputy Chief Minister, Education Health and Welfare.	1/ 16.6%	Health, Education and Welfare
TCI	5/45.4%	Education, Culture and Gender Affairs, Health, Human Services and Gender Affairs, Deputy Governor, Elected Member, Deputy Speaker	2/16.6%	Education, Youth, Sports, Culture and Gender Affairs, Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs.	0/0%	-
Grenada	6/54.5%	Youth Development, Education and Labour, Social Dev. Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and the Performing Arts, Portfolio,	4/ 33.3%	Comm., Works & Public Utilities, Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries, Tourism, Civil Aviation, Social Security, Gender & Portfolio	2/ 22.2%	Tourism, Education
Country	Term 3		Term 2		Term 1	Portfolio
		Legal Affairs Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture & The Perf. Arts, Commun., Works &Transport, Health , Social Security, the Environment & Ecclesiastic Relat.		Family Affairs		

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